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THE SONG AND THE SOIL

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

The Short Course Series

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THE SONG AND THE SOIL

OR, THE MISSIONARY IDEA IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY

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"By the missionary thought in the Old Testament is to be understood the faith that in the future the whole earth will come to the knowledge of Jehovah's glory and all peoples pray unto Him. The missionary thought lies altogether at the circumference not in the centre of the Old Testament. It has definite prophetic thoughts as its presupposition and reaches its highest point at a time when the prophetic movement lies already in the past; but the opposition in which it stands to the particularism of the Law and the Jewish abhorrence of all things heathenish never allowed it to reach a practical significance."

Professor MAX LÖHR.

I.

THE SONG AND THE SOIL.

Psalm CXXXVII.

This cry "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" came from the deep places of the human soul; it was wrung out of the hearts of men who were in great pain; it comes as an apology for solemn silence and tells the story of a lost song. In an exposition our first duty is to revert to the original and restore to the text the personal name of Israel's God. "How can we sing Jehovah's song in a foreign land?" Why is this necessary? Because, on account of the present translation, the question loses its keen edge; the historical reference so necessary to a true understanding of this particular passage is largely hidden. To us, "Lord" means the eternal

and ever present God, the ruler of the universe in the fullest sense. The song of this God can be sung in any land and at all times; it is now a question of religion in the personal sense and not of geography, a matter of the spirit and not of the soil.

"Where'er they seek Thee Thou art found
And every place is hallowed ground." [1]

These beautiful words are commonplace to us, that is they express a theory of God and worship that we have come to regard as self-evident. But that only shows that one of our religious needs is a quickening of the historical imagination, so that we may realise how much toil of brain and pain of heart the saints in the past have had to endure that this great inheritance might be ours. This is a much larger question than it seems to be when we are looking merely on the surface; it is not simply that a few obscure people by the rivers of Babylon find that tearful silence, not joyful song, suits the mood of that particular hour. When we translate the

[1] Cowper.

pathetic cry into the larger language for which it craves it means: Can our religion take root in this foreign soil; can we truly worship the God of Israel in this strange land that is under the sway of arrogant magnificent idols? Thus stated, the question is seen to be of more than personal or parochial significance. Already there comes to us a suggestion that *we* have a concern in it; that these men are wrestling with a problem that relates to the life of humanity.

I. The Commonplaces of Life.

One keen critic has made the remark that the Psalter is, on the whole, a commonplace book.[1] We, because of our intense reverence for this noble collection of sacred songs, are apt to resent the statement as manifesting a cold, cynical spirit of criticism. But, rightly taken, taken no doubt in the spirit in which it was meant, there is a fine suggestiveness in it. As a matter of fact, the greatness of the Psalter consists rather in its spiritual

[1] Duhm.

quality than in its literary character. It contains, even from this point of view, great poems: the twenty-third, forty-second, fifty-first, seventy-third, and many more with their plaintive confession of sin and piercing cries for help. Some of the Pilgrim Psalms are real gems, remarkable for their many-sided beauty, a beauty that shines the more clearly because the light is condensed into small space. The less passionate hymns and the calm reviews of history have a fine, liturgical quality. All this is true, but it is also true that if in the Old Testament we would seek the grand style, glorious rhetoric, gorgeous imagery, organ-like music, passionate poetry, we must turn to Job and Isaiah rather than to the Psalter. But the common is not necessarily the commonplace in a poor sense. Many of the psalms deal in simple language, in plain, poetic parallelism, with the daily joys and sorrows, the common hopes and fears, of struggling men. While we find in the New Testament[1]

[1] Job v. 13; 1 Cor. iii. 19. Of course there are many general similarities of thought and expression, as Job iv. 8; Gal. vi. 7, 8, etc.

one clear quotation from the great dramatic poem that wrestles so fiercely with the problem of suffering, the writings of evangelists and apostles are saturated with the thoughts and language of this great book of praise. A book that has so mightily influenced the public worship and private devotion of Judaism and Christendom does not depend for its reputation or its power upon our literary appreciation; fearless criticism cannot harm it but may help us to come nearer to its heart; of it, as a whole, we may say that it lifts our common affections and needs into the light of that divine presence from which there streams the healing rays of mercy and forgiveness.

Another careful scholar[1] has said that, after the period of silence, when the harp was taken down from the willow, the first note was a discord. We all know what that means. We have read the psalm in a spirit of sympathy, we have been deeply moved by its pathetic cry, and then, as we come to the

[1] Bæthgen.

close, we shivered as this jarring note struck our souls—

"O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed;
Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us.
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock."

It is not that we do not ourselves cry to Heaven against cruel oppression; it is not that we do not feel bitter resentment against wrong; it is not that we ourselves have grown quite out of sympathy with natural revenge. That which causes the shock is that we realise so keenly, especially when the words are read in the calmness of the sanctuary, the sharp contrast with the Christian ideal. We think at the same time of Him Who, on the cross, prayed for His enemies, and we acknowledge that vengeance belongeth unto the Lord.

In music and in life the discord has its uses, and here it reminds us that the poem is not a mere literary creation, that it is the expression of real passion, suffused with agonised feeling, stained with blood and

tears. War must always be a cruel thing; if ever a necessity, then a hateful necessity. The feature of it suggested here, that the lives of the weak and innocent were with ruthless cruelty sacrificed in cold blood, belongs to the conduct of war in ancient times as well as in days not so very remote from our own. The Hebrew patriot invoked against his powerful foe "the law of like"; he prayed that the horrors that had come upon his country and his friends might, in God's providence, fall upon the proud enemy. Now it is our duty as Christian disciples to purge our hearts from hatred, and leave vengeance to public justice and to the God of heaven. But we are not called to judge severely those who stand at an earlier stage and who express the elemental passions in a less disciplined form. The varied moods of men represented in our Bible are interesting and instructive to us, but they do not express an absolute infallible standard; it is when we see the great differences in tone and temper at different periods of the history that we understand the phrase "progressive

revelation" not as a mere dogma, but as a fact of life.

2. The Exile.

The exile, so fateful in the history of the Hebrew people and their religion, and through it in the life of humanity, was, in a sense, only one of the cruel incidents of ancient warfare. The Israelites of the Northern kingdom had, in the eighth century B.C., suffered a similar experience. After the fall of Samaria, many of them had been deported and settled in various regions of the Assyrian empire; they were "lost" in that they were scattered and had not attained to sufficient distinctness of religious character to maintain their separate life. The Jews who were carried away to Babylon before and at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, were able to form colonies in the new land, and had, through the teaching of the prophets and the discipline of the Law, already achieved a more definite character. The temple was destroyed, the land was laid

desolate, but the religion could not be killed. The broken-hearted patriots faced the question that is raised in the text, "Can the religion live in the new conditions, apart from the land that was its original home and without the temple that was the scene and centre of its worship?" At the time it might seem, to the superficial observer, to concern merely the fate of a small, obscure sect; seen in the larger light of history it is a problem of the widest human interest. These people, in different groups, had been driven across the dreary desert to a foreign land, a land, in most respects, opposite in character to their own. Palestine was a small land, a land of hills and dales, a land that with its simple beauty and historic associations took a firm grip of the patriotic heart. Babylon was a great land, wonderful in its own way, spacious and splendid, but much more of a man-made land, with its artificial irrigation and its marvellous buildings. There was something overpowering in the vastness of this empire, in its population, its political organisation, and military

equipment. Here was religion bewildering in its variety and magnificence, with many gods, immense temples, highly-trained priests and scribes; in fact, the Jews, bereft of their own national sanctuary, were suddenly flung face to face with a mighty empire and a great religion, both resting on centuries of ancient civilisation and culture.

Little wonder that the question was both persistent and oppressive, "How can we sing Jehovah's song in a foreign land; in a land that belongs to other gods and where our religion, so beautiful in its own home, seems to be an alien, helpless thing?" The magnificent declaration of "Deutero-Isaiah," that these great empires crumble to pieces while the word of Israel's God abides for ever was the utterance of a triumphant faith.[1] Our psalm, on the other hand, brings to us the restless fear and tormenting anxiety of the doubt and despondency that consumed the strength of the common man.

And yet enlargement came through affliction. Out of this crisis arose a new church,

[1] Isa. xl. 8.

not absolutely new, for no great thing is a mere novelty. The living truth or the institution that meets ne needs is always true to the great past. The exile does mark a new epoch but it is not an absolute beginning. It threw the true believers more completely on those things of the past that could be preserved and revivified; they learned to understand their own literature and life.

The Jew became a student; in a more special way, the book and the regular meeting for fellowship took the place of the elaborate ritual and the sanctity of the temple. Thus he prepared the way for a simple worship that could be carried into all lands. He became also a missionary because, wherever he went, he must carry his religion with him, and as it was, in so many respects, a noble religion, it made its appeal to receptive souls. In many ways then, here was a severance from merely local elements and an emergence of universal features. Jerusalem must remain the centre of the religion and the ideal city of God; the songs must still be "songs of Zion," but they gained a more than national

quality; spiritual feeling tended to break down sectarian barriers. So when we throw the light of history upon this question, our sympathy for the perplexed patriots is kindled as we remember that in the confusion of their disappointment they could not see the full scope of their own inquiry and the largeness of God's answer.

Another gain was revelation through experience. How do men learn such a great truth as this, a truth so alien to crude, primitive thought, that the true sacrifice is the broken heart and contrite spirit?[1] Not by dictation from prophet or priest, nor even by verbal statement from heaven, but by actual experience, sanctified by the guidance of God's spirit. We have to learn it in this way to-day though it has been written in the book and nobly expounded. It was when the temple was lost that men learned its limitation as well as its true glory. It was not wrought out in speculative theory but in the hard facts of a painful discipline that Jehovah's songs, the songs of Zion, could be

[1] Ps. li. 17.

sung in a foreign land. Thus the presence of Jehovah everywhere was proved and the borders of Zion were enlarged. This could not come to perfection all at once; even our "monotheism" is still limited in practice, though in thought it has attained to universal significance. To do justice to the actual facts we must use the great watchwords of different ages and speak of evolution through election, and revelation through life. These all find their expression in literature, most of all in this sacred literature which tells the story of man's pilgrimage toward the heavenly city, the home of truth.

3. The Lost Song.

What becomes of a song when you cannot sing it? That depends surely upon the character of the song. If it is a shallow jingle, a song of the earth and of the hour, it dies upon your lips in the face of a great sorrow and disappears for ever. If it is of God and eternity it passes through silence to a larger life. Let us not be afraid of silence,

it has its part to play as well as speech. When you cannot sing the song you can think upon its meaning and it may strike more deeply into your heart. We can read of men, like Robertson of Brighton,[1] who, at a particular period of their career, lost their theology though their religion did not die. To such men the hour of silence was fruitful, they fought their doubts, they gathered strength, they did not make their judgment blind. A larger, richer theology was born of a deeper experience. The expression of this renewed life might seem to the narrow ritualist or hard legalist to be "heretical," but to the great outside world it carried a wealth of inspiration and blessing. Thus the lost song has ever passed through silence to a larger life. The cry "How can we sing Jehovah's song in a strange land?" tells us of the growing pains of the Hebrew religion, it shows us the struggle through which it passed from a small local scene to the forefront of the world's great stage. If Judaism never became completely universal, it gained

[1] See *Life of F. W. Robertson*, by Stopford Brooke.

something of a world-wide spirit. Even those who would fain have kept the music of the song to themselves, when they learned to sing it in a foreign land, rendered a service to humanity and prepared the way for a fuller emancipation and enfranchisement of religion and the soul.

And the music of this song ought to be heard in everything. Our foreign lands are not all a matter of geography. The Church has carried the gospel into every land and translated the Bible into every tongue; but can we say we have no strange lands, no provinces of life, that are still to be won for God? We know well that to-day there must be an historical development, an extension of God's power into every corner of the soul and every sphere of human life.

Sorrow, in all its forms, is still to us a foreign land although it is the common lot of mortals. We have each to face it and find God in it. When it comes upon us suddenly and with great force we cry, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth because thou didst it."[1] When we have looked into the face

[1] Ps. xxxix. 9.

of some great disappointment that has dislocated all our plans and brought confusion into our life, we have asked the pertinent question, "How can I be expected to sing the Lord's song in this strange land?" Our silence may grow sullen and our hearts become bitter under the pressure of pain, but if we come out of our sad experience with a stronger faith, then our joy is purer and richer.

Politics seem to many people to be a foreign land where strict honesty and noble sentiment can scarcely be at home. Some have, in a cynical mood, maintained that we cannot in this region hold the same standard of truth and kindness that we expect in the home and the church. This is a wretched dualism, we can only have two standards if we have two gods. One of these gods is likely to be a devil, a patron of false compromise and corrupt greed. The true patriots are those who are endeavouring to sing the Lord's song in this land, a song of goodwill and helpfulness to those who are in need.

Still less does it seem possible to apply Christian principles to all our relations with men of different blood and language. They are our rivals in commerce and may be our enemies in war; we must watch them keenly and be ready, at any moment, to meet them in fierce strife. If this is true then we must confess that we have not yet solved the problem that faced the patriots in Babylon. There are whole tracts of human life that are in the sway of strange gods and that do not yet acknowledge the Prince of Peace. In all lands, and in all churches, Christian men need to meditate upon this ancient question and find that there is still a deep suggestiveness in the words, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" We cannot be content, and the spirit of our religion cannot be fulfilled, until in all spheres of life and in all regions of the world the actual rule of the Christ is accepted, and we can say in the largest sense, "On His head are many crowns."[1]

[1] Rev. xix. 12.

II.

THE ATTRACTIVE POWER OF TRUE RELIGION.

Isaiah II. 2–4; Micah IV. 1–4.

I. The Place of the Passage in Hebrew Literature.

We have here a passage which appears in two places, and the simplest explanation of that fact is that it, at one time, existed separately and was placed by different editors in two different collections. If we were compelled to attribute it to either Isaiah or Micah, Isaiah must certainly have the preference, as he was an inhabitant of Jerusalem and loved the city. Micah, on the other hand, was a countryman, and found in the cities of Samaria and Jerusalem the chief cause of offence against Jehovah; his denunciation of those cities and especially his prediction of the

destruction of Jerusalem made a deep impression.[1] We cannot think that the peasant prophet of the Judean lowlands, in the eighth century B.C., cherished any such lofty ideal for the future destiny of the city that he denounced; he was concerned with its present corruption rather than its future exaltation. For Isaiah the case was different, he shared the life of Jerusalem and did not merely denounce it from the outside; he had a message of hope as well as a fierce indictment, and believed in redemption after judgment, if only for a remnant. This may be seen clearly from that noble "Song of the City" which all regard as genuine.[2] In the Book of Isaiah, then, this poem has found a suitable home, as the supreme interest of that prophet was in the city of David, and he cherished desires and hopes for the future welfare of Zion, even if he did not express them in this precise form. Still, after all, it is more likely that these words came to us

[1] Mic. iii. 12; Jer. xxvi. 18.

[2] Isa. i. 21–26; cf. also "The Song of the Vineyard," v. 1–7.

from a disciple of the prophet who lived at least two centuries later, in the age of Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah. We are not able to fit this passage into any particular period of Isaiah's political activity and popular preaching, though to some scholars it still seems possible to regard it as a dream of his youth or the hope of his old age. Isaiah's message, however, as we know it, belongs to a different order of thought. Instead of creating glowing pictures of the distant future for men of faith, he is engaged in a severe struggle to teach the true nature of faith and the moral character of worship.[1] To retain the passage for Isaiah at the expense of unduly narrowing its meaning is too great a price to pay. It does not do full justice to this great hope to say that the nations will not give up their own worship but merely acknowledge Jehovah as the most upright and truest God.[2] Long ago it was clearly seen that the promise had a much larger scope. "The representation appears in a highly purified form, and worthy

[1] Isa. vii. 9; i. 10–1

[2] Duhm, cf. Gray, *The International Commentary.*

of both prophets, that the nations shall make their pilgrimage to Jerusalem not for the purpose of offering sacrifice there but to learn God's way, the knowledge of Whom shall go out from there over the world—a splendid presentiment which has received its fulfilment in Christianity."[1] The nobler view depicted in these words demands the later date. It was only through the slow painful discipline of many generations that this consciousness of a high vocation and this vision of world-wide service was reached.

It is worth while repeating that there is the closest connection between literature and life, the life of godly men to whom we owe so much, the life which has proved itself to be one of the highest organs of the divine revelation.[2] The fact that we must now regard the Book of Isaiah not as the work of one man but as a library of prophetic literature, reflects great light on the struggles of those distant days. The revelation in this book is now seen to be larger and more varied than ever before. The original Isaiah of

[1] Gesenius, 1821.

[2] See p. 78.

Jerusalem stands more clearly before us with his presentation of the kingship of Jehovah, his call to faith and social service.[1] Then we have the great "Book of Consolation" which gave comfort to a broken-hearted people when the threatenings of the earlier prophets had received a terrible fulfilment.[2] Belonging to a still later age we find the predictions of world judgment and the final vindication of Jehovah's people.[3] Into this storehouse also are gathered many fragments, the work of nameless souls who poured their best thoughts and richest life into this great stream of literature.

The fact that in so many cases these beautiful pictures have been placed alongside of the stern preaching of the earlier prophets and their fiery predictions of judgment, shows a living belief that judgment cannot be the last word, that in spite of man's perverseness there is mercy in the heart of God.[4] Surely, so thought these men, death and destruction cannot he the final purpose of the eternal

[1] Isa. vi.
[2] Isa. xl.–lv.
[3] Isa. xxiv.–xxvii.
[4] Cf. Isa. iv. 2-6.

God, the promises to our fathers cannot altogether fail. Here was a true faith that manifested itself not only in the men of great creative genius but also in the minds of lowly compilers who would not willingly let die any great inspired word. Thus in this sacred literature, and all round the various systems into which it has been built, there plays the light of a great belief in the meaning of history and in the unfailing providence of a gracious God.

2. The Growth of the Idea.

As a mere matter of theory or of God's power, considered in the abstract, a particular piece of literature could be inspired at any time, but this has been shown by a careful reading of the Scriptures to be a mechanical view—the product of a theology that has gone too far from actual life. Even in the earlier day, men who thought upon "the ways of God" in a simple manner could see that there had been an advance from lower to loftier views of God and duty, that the

Christ came in "the fulness of time" to give a richer reality to thoughts that had long been struggling for expression. This truth, held at first in a vague imperfect form, now shines out with wonderful clearness. Not only is it in harmony with one of the leading ideas of our time, it has also been abundantly illustrated by the historical study of the sacred writings. We can trace the growth of the Hebrew nation and the gradual enlargement of the religion that this nation was destined to give to the world. The people had to conquer a home for themselves and a measure of real political unity, before the prophetic message could enter deeply into their life and grow into a system of living truth of more than national significance. The blessing said to have been given to Abraham appears to mean that his seed should become so numerous and prosperous that they would excite the admiration and envy of surrounding people.[1] The Israelites did not at first claim the whole world or even the whole of Palestine for

[1] Gen. xii. 3; etc.

Jehovah their God; they acknowledged the presence and power of other gods in adjoining territories.[1] The thing that made it specially hard for David to suffer banishment was that he would be driven from the worship of Jehovah his God.[2] In those days the natural action for men who joined another tribe was to attach themselves to the god of that tribe, as religion permeated all the activities of life. No doubt, even then the Hebrew leaders had a noble thought of their God, the One Who had called them into existence as a nation and given them great privileges as His servants. This faith maintained itself as the one power that gave unity to the scattered clans; the God of Israel conquered the local gods and revealed Himself as the real source of natural blessings. Through the conflict with Baal worship the thought of Jehovah's nature and power was enriched. This involved fierce conflicts under the leadership of patriotic warriors and fiery prophets. The great prophets, whose sermons have come down to

[1] Judg. xi. 24. [2] 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

us from the eighth century before the Christ, had received a great inheritance from the past but they had still a great work to do. They found the people relying too much on ritual, and treating the worship of Jehovah too much like that given by their neighbours to other gods. It was their task to set forth what we would call the moral character of God. They did not do this in any abstract way as critics and philosophers, nor could they speak in the conventional tone of the modern preacher. While they regarded themselves as conservatives who would uphold or restore the best traditions of the past, there was a certain vein of originality in their teaching; there was a strong and clearer emphasis on the fact that religion is goodness. Goodness they thought of as good citizenship; the good man was one who walked before God in a spirit of humility and acknowledged the claims of brotherhood, paying special heed to the cry of the oppressed and the helpless widows and orphans.[1] When this

[1] Isa. i. 17; Hos. vi. 6; Amos v. 11, 24.

is spoken of as *ethical* monotheism, attention is called to the fact that they did not begin from the thought of one God and argue consciously for one all-prevailing law, but they laid such stress upon the claims of social goodness and civil righteousness as binding upon *all*, that it must be seen, upon further reflection, that there is one living God, the King of all men. Many Jews never saw the full consequence of such teaching, and remained in the region of religious tribalism, but the prophetic movement advanced on this high plane. Under the influences of this teaching of the prophets, thoughtful men learned to look upon their past history as a divine discipline,[1] and it is seen that "election" is to service and not merely to privilege. Such a great movement could not go forward without reactions and disappointments. The natural man would cling persistently to the thought that the chief purpose of a god was to give material prosperity and success against the

[1] Deut. viii. 3; Isa. xl.-lv. See especially the Servant passages.

outside enemy. Such a bare outline as this cannot do justice to a complex situation; it deals in general terms, leaving aside all the picturesque details of a struggle that went on unceasingly. The conflict between what we call "superstition" and the higher faith entered into all spheres of political and domestic life; it was a struggle between great thoughts and deep-seated instincts and long-established customs. But while to the last the religion of the Old Testament is kept within national limits, and in many cases coarse, narrow features mark the picture of the future, yet it is no exaggeration to say that the great leaders of the people came to the vision of a national vocation that carried in itself a suggestion of world-wide service.

3. The Statement of the Passage.

It seems probable that we have here a poem in three strophes or verses, and that in each of these divisions we have a distinct feature of the picture of the glorious

future.[1] Here is set forth first the exaltation of Zion; Jehovah's mountain is to be established at the head of the mountains, or to be acknowledged as the chief of the mountains. It is possible that a physical heightening as well as a religious supremacy may be implied in this prediction. Zion thus exalted and acknowledged as, so to speak, the religious metropolis of the world, shall draw to itself vast numbers of people of different nationalities. By the eye of faith the prophet sees them flowing in great streams to the holy city, and they themselves declare that the purpose of their pilgrimage is to go up to Jehovah's mountain and to the house of the God of Jacob. The reason why they seek to visit the sanctuary of Jehovah is then given; it is not merely to bring sacrifice and find favour, but to receive teaching. For Zion is the source of religious instruction, and from Jerusalem the word of God starts out upon a mission of mercy to mankind. Thus

[1] There are three strophes of six lines each, but in that case the couplet, "They shall sit every man," etc., is not an original part of the poem.

Jehovah is recognised as the judge or arbitrator between nations. His decisions will be gladly accepted outside the bounds of Israel. The result of God's rule entering into human life shall be abiding peace and prosperity.

"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.
But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree;
And nought shall make them afraid."

Simply to state in plain words the contents of the poem is to show that we are moving in a realm of great religious ideas. The modern man may be stirred to such impatience with the fact that it all centres so clearly round Jerusalem that he is in danger of branding the whole thing as narrow and parochial. But when we talk so proudly about "the universe" and despise local traditions and sentiments, we do well to ask whence came this large ordered world of which we claim to be citizens; is it not also a thought that has grown through the centuries and to which the men of Jerusalem have contributed their share?

Think, then, without prejudice, of the rich instruction implied in the simple statements of this short poem. It shows that the Jews, with their centre at Jerusalem, have now come to the clear conviction that their God is supreme, and therefore the place of His sanctuary must become glorious in the sight of the world. It is His presence that gives strength and dignity to the city. This God is so related to the people of the earth that the manifestation of His presence will attract countless multitudes. Men feel that their great need is ... ction, a divine light must fall across life's pathway if men are to know how to live and how to treat each other. The acknowledgment of a common Lord, the source of true teaching and the giver of justice, is the condition of that peace for which men hungered in those weary, restless days. There is a fine spiritual logic in the passage; the things that are placed side by side have a vital relationship to each other and not a mere external connection. We ought to be able to see this more clearly than the original writer as we read his pro-

gramme in the light of larger experience. We need not repeat the statement that no one local sanctuary can meet the spiritual needs of the human race, that if Christianity is to be more than a mere name the modern Babylons must be conquered in the name of the God of righteousness. When this national feature is allowed for it is still a great thing that this disciple of the prophets sees so clearly into the connection of spiritual forces, and that while placing the scene in his own city he has dreamed a dream large enough for the world. Thus he glorifies noble teaching and gives the real condition of peace as the common reception and acknowledgment of great principles.

4. The Missionary Idea in the Passage, and its Permanence.

A number of the ideas mentioned above would bear further meditation and fuller expansion, but we are now more particularly concerned with one, namely, the attractive

power of a great religion. There is a great confidence that a real revelation from God has been given, and that such a revelation will be its own evidence, and will draw to it sincere truth-seeking spirits. Later, there came the command to go forth and teach all nations, and the great thought that the possession of an important truth carries with it the obligation to missionary service. But first this side of the missionary idea was born, that God will make the place of His dwelling glorious with a glory that will break down local barriers and sectarian prejudice. It may seem strange to us that the Jew, who later gained the reputation of "a hater of mankind," should have set forth, in such noble forms, beliefs that imply a real relationship between the men of different nations—a relationship that is deeper and stronger than the superficial differences that divide them. Here is faith in the presence of God and the power of His revelation, faith in the need, dignity, and capacity of man, faith in the strength and beauty of truth and the influence of teaching, faith in

a brighter future for which men yearn and which God will grant. All these expressions need, for our day, to be translated into larger forms, but the germ of great things is here. Specially do we need this thought that the highest religion will be, in the best sense, attractive; it will have a gentle influence because of what it is in itself, just because the life of God is in it it cannot be kept in any "holy city," men will come for it and carry it forth. In this sense was the religion of Old Testament times missionary, that there grew up in Israel a great gift of God which, "shining more and more unto the perfect day," could not be confined by limitations of place or nationality, and without formal propaganda forced its way out into the life of the world.

The permanence of this idea is one of the outstanding features of our time. To-day, in all Christian nations, there is a strong manifestation of the missionary spirit, preachers and teachers are sent forth throughout the world; the organisation for this kind of work is growing and becoming

constantly more effective. We cannot now dwell upon the advantage and dangers of all this machinery; this one fact, however, demands our attention: there must be a living relation between the life of a nation and its missionary service. The Jews became, in a certain measure, a missionary people because they were led by God to a richer conception of truth and a stronger thought of religion than that which their world possessed. We cannot, then, press the distinction between home and foreign missionary. We may find foreign missionary work in our own city and in our own souls; or, in other words, the assistance of our foreign missionaries must not be merely in our financial support and their self-sacrificing spirit, but it must have its real basis in the character of the nation that sends them. Thus it is seen that the right solution of our own political and social problems is a part of foreign missionary work. If we cannot conquer, to a larger extent, the power of drink, ignorance, and vice within our own borders, we cannot do the highest kind of

missionary work. If Christian nations cannot bring principles of justice into their treatment of weaker peoples and their relations with each other, to that extent do they fall short of the prophetic programme. The time has gone by when the missionary work can be considered as being summed up in an effort to give peace to the individual soul, so that heaven may be accepted as the deliverance from, and the compensation for, the ills of earth. The relationship of man to God, indeed of individual men to God, must always be the basis of religion, the inspiration of all high service. But we must now construe the service more broadly, we must realise that religion has to create a city of God here, a society whose members seek to live in righteousness and enjoy that peace which can be based on righteousness alone. The sense of the Divine presence, the influence of high teaching, the attractiveness of noble life, the community of need and desire, or the true brotherhood of men—insomuch as Christian nations are succeeding in giving a living expression to these religious ideas,

we may say that the true Jerusalem is finding a place on earth ; and, at least, let us in our churches beware lest, when we have elaborated the missionary machinery to high perfection, there should be radical weakness in the inner life. It is not a final, finished theology that we can send out in definite parcels, but a living, growing faith that we must share with mankind. The oneness of humanity means now something larger than ever before, but we rejoice that in this charming picture from a distant time there is, with all its simplicity, a suggestion and promise of a fellowship that is spiritual and eternal.

III.

THE MISSIONARY SERVANT.

Isaiah XLII. 1–4.

In the series of poems contained in the chapters xl.–lv., which in their spirit and style form in substance one discourse, the purpose is distinctly stated, namely, to comfort Jehovah's people and inspire them to new courage by the vision of a glorious destiny. These chapters are now generally regarded as the work of a prophet whose name and exact place of residence are unknown, who was moved by the Spirit of God to give consolation to the sorrowing exiles. He bases his message of comfort on a great theology, a lofty view of God, splendidly set forth in the noble introductory chapter (xl.). Jehovah, the Creator of the world, the Supreme Guide of history, has called him to the ministry of mercy. In that dark hour,

when the nation was in ruins, and the plans of its leaders in hopeless confusion, nothing but a great thought of God could act with creative healing power. We cannot at this point attempt to expound the whole theology of the prophet who has been called "Deutero-Isaiah." Suffice it to say that it was in the hour of sorrow that the mission of the nation began to take on a wider outlook. Why indeed should this great God build up the walls of Jerusalem and bring together the scattered sons and daughters of Zion if there were not some great purpose in view? This thought is not worked out into a complete philosophy, it is not freed entirely from all national limitations, but there is less of hostility to "the heathen," and there is a looking towards the great truth that those whom God redeems and to whom He reveals Himself must in their turn be witnesses and light-bearers.[1] This "election" is from the free sovereign mercy of Jehovah and not from Israel's merit; out of the richness of His nature, the largeness of His love, the

[1] xlii. 6; xliii. 10.

God of Israel lavishes upon His people this undeserved and unrequited generosity. The very statement of such a love has in it something evangelical, something that will, when it is understood, overpass the limits of mere nationality.

1. The Servant Idea and the Servant Passages.

It is true that this comes out most clearly in the four passages which are regarded as separate poems and thought by some scholars to be of later date.[1] There the figure of the servant appears, elected to teach the nations, conscious of a mission larger in its scope than the ministry to Israel, subject to misinterpretation and persecution, bearing the burden of pain for the benefit of others. Many of the keenest scholars still believe that these poems stand in their proper place and form the loftiest points of Deutero-Isaiah's teaching. On this view, Israel, in the hour of weakness and apparent extinction,

[1] xlii. 1–4; xlix. 1–6; l. 4–9; lii. 13–liii. 12.

is led to the great thought that she is a missionary nation, that she must bear witness in a gentle spirit to an unbelieving world. Not only is the light in Jerusalem kindled by Jehovah's presence to be so pure and strong as to attract those who are hungering for the truth, there is to be an effort to carry that truth into distant lands. This is then the nearest approach to the great command, "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all nations."[1] The ideal is there, whether it is this great poet's conception of Israel's election to service or whether it is a picture of an individual teacher and sufferer whose destiny it is to give a larger, richer meaning to the service of Jehovah. The principles that underlie the statement imply a oneness of humanity and a universality of religion that can only come to full expression through much painful progress. The greatness of the missionary idea is seen more clearly when we catch a glimpse of the process by which, like all great truths, it has been wrought into the substance of the world's

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19.

highest life. Like the belief in one God, the hope of immortality, and other central ideas of the Christian faith, this thought that men of different races must minister to each other in the highest things has grown to clearness of expression through centuries of silent preparation. This could not possibly be accomplished in any one generation in a world arranged and ruled on the same principle as ours. It required that the Hebrews, very similar in their origin and character to other Semitic tribes, should first be separated from their neighbours by the growing strictness of their law and the severer demands of their God. This involved bitter struggles within the nation itself, springing from the attempt to make the law of Jehovah supreme in all spheres and produce "a holy nation." This attempt was scarcely well on the way under the noble movement represented by the Book of Deuteronomy, when the people were sent forth to learn from the hard logic of facts that the truth could live away from the soil and religion exist apart from the temple. It

was indeed a complex movement, and many good men found it difficult to adjust themselves to the different aspects of it. The nobler men among the Jews were driven to turn their attention from the local forms of worship to the large universal aspects of the truth. Their next effort was to build that truth into a system, keep it pure, guard it from the attacks of those who, in the very process of sharing it, would once more weaken and degrade it. So the movement went forward, first, separation for the sake of serving Jehovah, then a higher view of the nature of that service; a vigorous attempt to embody this service in city and temple, then the sharp lesson that the truth is something greater than either city or temple; an exultant cry caused by a noble interpretation of history, "Our God has been teaching us great lessons,"[1] then the vision, given to a few noble souls, that the divine thing, the lesson from God, cannot be for ourselves alone. This reaches its height in the picture of the servant. This servant-idea, whether it

[1] Deut. viii.

is that of a prophet nation or a personal minister, is essentially Christian in its scope and significance; that is, it shows thoughts struggling for expression which have attained in Christianity a freer movement and a supreme embodiment in the life of the Christ. The servant, having a call to carry the religion beyond the bounds of the nation, addresses the distant isles and offers to meet the hunger and expectation of their peoples.[1] The same servant faces fierce opposition with the confidence that God, who is on the side of truth, is more than all the opposing forces.[2] The silent sufferer, the God-cursed man, bearing the sorrows of his kind or of mankind, presents a still deeper view of such ministry, a view that is prophetic of the noblest missionary work.[3]

In the small Book of Jonah we have the other side of the picture. Here is presented a different type of a prophet, one who is chiefly concerned with prediction in a mechanical sense and with his own personal glory. This man is reluctantly

[1] xlix. 1. [2] l. 7. [3] liii. 5.

driven to the foreign field and is content with the rôle of a mere prophet of vengeance. One cannot help feeling, as we study the teaching of this wonderful little book, that there is an element of satire in it, that it is a keen protest against religious narrowness. The Jonah of this book is no real prophet, but the writer of it is deeply imbued with the prophetic spirit. If we could know more clearly and closely the circumstances of the Jewish Church at the time when it was written, we might enter even more fully into its spirit. As it is, we feel that the keynote of it is to be found in the words attributed to the men of Nineveh: "Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?" And every generous soul welcomes the statement, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which He said He would do unto them; and He did it not."

That this thing "displeased Jonah ex-

ceedingly" is to us a revelation of this "prophet's" littleness of soul, and we rejoice in the large sympathy of the question with which the book closes, "And should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city; wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?" Our pride and petulance is rebuked, our narrow dogmas and small ecclesiastical interests shrink into their proper proportions when thus set in the larger light of God's great purposes and humanity's pressing needs.

2. The Foundation of the Servant's Work.

The work of the servant rests securely upon the divine call and God-given equipment. In this whole Book the movement is from God to man: what man can do by his worship or work is infinitely small; it is in the reality and beneficence of Jehovah's purpose that strength is found. It is the

great revelation of God that gives the noble thought of service. Here particularly the thought that election is not to mere privilege but to service receives special prominence.[1] God's delight in the servant is linked with the work that he shall do. The purpose of the calling is that he may publish law or spread religion; this is the high vocation in which, through the submission of the servant, the God of heaven finds satisfaction.[2] The God who calls him equips him for the high task.

This belief in the gift of the Spirit of Jehovah, as an endowment fitting men for royal service or prophetic ministry, like all other great truths, has had a long[3] complex history before it appears in this pure form. To-day there are those, even in the Christian Church, who either bind this sacred influence to magical ceremonies or find it most fully in the startling and sensational. We are tempted to say that these are but remnants of earlier, cruder forms of thought, but perhaps we do well to guard against the

[1] xlix. 6, 7. [2] xlii. 4. [3] xi. 2.

pride of intellectual refinement and to remember that the Divine Spirit is still compelled to work in imperfect forms. Indeed, what form can perfectly represent the pure thought of God? This much, however, we must say, that this noble picture of a quiet servant who, in his steady, thoughtful work of teaching, proves the power of "the Spirit's" presence with him, is one of the highest points of Old Testament prophecy. Here the Spirit is not manifested in violent energy of patriotic passion or ecstatic emotion.[1] There is a steady radiance of light and love ministering to human need. The Spirit here does not seize, overpower, and startle, It enters into the life of the soul to give abiding wisdom and strength. Men believed in spirits of various kinds that entered into human life with mysterious power and lawless action. The relation of these strange forces to the God of Israel was not, all at once, worked out clearly, but as the prophets came to a loftier thought of

[1] Judg. iii. 10; xiv. 6; 1 Sam. x. 10; xix. 20; 2 Kings ii. 9, etc.

God it was seen that all forces must be subject to His sway and all spirits obedient to His will. As the whole world becomes God's world, so religion becomes a power ruling the whole man; the message of the teachers gains high intellectual qualities and great moral force. The Spirit becomes the creative, guiding, and inspiring power in the highest sense; at this stage it is possible to have the ideal of a teacher who, while he arises within the nation, represents a faith that is beginning to chafe against its national barriers.

3. The Power of Gentleness.

One of the most important features of this picture is that such stress is laid upon the influence of quiet teaching. In those days men knew the stern coercion of custom or law; they were quite familiar with displays of unbridled enthusiasm in connection with patriotism or religion; they had known also from old times the reverence given to "wise men," men who could give practical guid-

ance. In the wonderful story of Elijah we learn that "the still small voice" may bring a revelation of God that is lacking in the violent earthquake or fierce storm.[1] It is difficult to say how far the presentation of a truth at a particular time is in all or any of its features new. But when we have read the older records and note the frequency of ecstatic outbursts and fierce denunciations as forms of prophetic life, we feel that here is a distinct recognition of the superiority of gentle reason and patient love. There may be a recognition of the fact that human nature has its rights as well as its weaknesses and needs, that the soul must not be overwhelmed by outside force or driven by fierce gusts of alien passion. Our Lord was a public speaker, he lifted up his voice to address the crowd, at times he was fierce in his indignation against hypocrisy and bigotry, yet the prevailing impression he has left is that of gentleness. When we think of the use that has been made of superstitious terror and brute force to bring men into the

[1] 1 Kings xix. 12.

fold that bears His name, we feel that we cannot reconcile such things with His spirit and teaching. In fact, when men turn with disgust from some shameful things in the history of the Church, they find relief from the nightmare in the restfulness of His presence, in the conviction that He has incarnated so completely the ideal of strong faith and gentle, persuasive power. It was a true instinct that led the evangelist to apply this glorious passage to his Master's avoidance of undue sensation and useless publicity.[1] That which created "Judaism" and enabled it to live for a while with the temple and to survive when the temple was finally destroyed, was just this recognition of intellectual and spiritual elements in religion that can be taught.[2] This also may produce hard tradition and cruel dogma, but that is because even the great things must have their share of human weakness. This belief in a system of living truth that can be taught, because there is something in man that needs and demands it; this glorification of the

[1] Matt. xii. 18–20.

[2] Deut. xi. 19.

teacher as a divine force that makes the message prevail as the sun conquers the darkness — this is the heart of any real missionary idea. Though students have done so much for the world, in all spheres of its life we still glorify "the practical man"; we admire the success that comes from loud advertisement, and fancy that the great things are created in the roaring excitement of the immense crowd. But when proper weight has been given to our denunciations of Rabbinism, scholasticism, and pedantry, it is well to remember how much we owe to the Book, its students, translators, and expositors. It speaks now in all the languages of the world; it is the greatest missionary power, and this miracle could never have come to pass unless men had loved it, collected its scattered fragments, pondered its difficult sentences, and glorified the work of the teacher. The true teacher finds his strength not in external authority but in the power of the truth; he labours patiently, knowing that if he can once lead men to catch a glimpse of the vision that has come to his

own soul they will see in it the very life of God.

4. The Success of the Servant.

The success of the servant is assured; he may have hours of despondency and cry, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and vanity,"[1] or "Will ye also go away?"[2] but this is but a passing mood, the dark shadow that falls at times over every earnest soul. He who does not break the crushed reed or quench the dimly burning wick shall not have his light dimmed or his spirit crushed, [illegible] will establish the reign of religion in the earth, and the coast-lands shall wait in expectant mood for his teaching. Truly a noble faith this, faith in the teacher's high mission, in the power of truth, in the need and capacity of human nature. God gave to this writer a large vision, it has stood there upon the written page, it has been claimed as a prophecy of the Christ, it has given cheer and stimulus to

[1] xlix. 4. [2] John vi. 67.

many a lonely worker; those who would teach any great truth still need its quickening hope. We are justified in ascribing a missionary character to the passage not simply because it is one of the clearest statements that Israel has a message which no temple can contain and no wall confine, but because of its own nature. The truths presented and implied have in them a movement towards universality. Behind the picture there is the thought of great truths that men outside the chosen community need and desire. There is the vision of a God who rules the world, and who has guided its history in such a way as to make the present an hour of opportunity. This short poem, these few well-chosen words, demand for themselves a rich fulfilment. The Jew may keep to himself mere local traditions and ceremonial customs, but a message with such an evangelical tone refuses to be imprisoned in any one dialect. It is not for a race but for humanity, not for an age but for all time, because it comes to us from men who, when they looked up to the

heavens, not only saw evidences of God's power but also heard the cry which is the root of all missionary enterprise, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."[1]

[1] xl. 26; and xlv. 22.

IV.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF PRAYER.

Isaiah LVI. 6, 7.

It is possible for scholars to differ as to the exact amount of "liberality" that is to be ascribed to this text, and we are rightly warned against severing it from its context and forgetting the hard legal elements by which it is surrounded.[1] It may be that these words come from a period when there was in the Jewish community considerable diversity of opinion and sharp discussion connected with this very subject. Perhaps in that time there were some "advanced thinkers" who, seeing that the true spiritual sacrifice could be separated from the temple, drew the conclusion that the temple might be dispensed with. If so, that was a mistake.

[1] By Duhm.

Universal House of Prayer

The time had not yet come when the great word that emancipates religion from the control of sacred places could be spoken, and even when that word was spoken, it was surely not meant to tear the religious life and worship away from local memories so that it might wander forth as a disembodied spirit in a superfine, ethereal freedom.[1] The word that destroys monopoly and shames sectarian bitterness is not intended to take out of religion all national life and patriotic feeling. The men who were, five hundred years before the Christ, putting their strength into the building of their own temple, were doing more than they knew for the higher life of the world. This they assert in their own tenacious and narrow fashion, when they claim that this house of Jehovah shall be a House of Prayer for all nations. The assertion cannot be dismissed as mere sectarian arrogance and fanatical patriotism, there is in it the consciousness of possessing truth that is of more than local meaning and application. It is one of the tragic things in human

[1] John iv. 21.

life that a great thought must be wrought into visible form in order to play its part in the world, and that when men seek to give it the form appropriate to their time and place, it may become narrow and even corrupt. But when we study the creeds and forms of a distant age we must remember that it was the noble faith and not the imperfect expression that gave the inspiration and energy. The temple was built as a manifestation of faith in God's goodness and man's need to worship.

1. The Welcome to the Foreigner.

We have here the distinct assurance that Jehovah is opposed to an arrogant exclusive spirit towards the foreigners and others, who were regarded in the strict legal sense as ineligible to become members of the community.[1] The great thing is not the bodily condition or the difference of race but the willingness to submit to Jehovah and to submit to His ordinance. It is true that some among the people took a narrower view, or

[1] Deut. xxiii. 1–3.

this exhortation would not have been uttered; it is also true that by the conflicts that took place later for the purity and even the existence of their religion the hearts of the stricter Jews were hardened against the outside world. Yet, except in the very heat of battle, they did not lose sight altogether of the larger significance of their faith. The vision of God's greatness carried with it, even indirectly, the oneness of the world and the brotherhood of men. Foreigners are at first welcomed to the brotherhood under stern precise conditions; but this is a beginning, and it is difficult for us now, with all our wisdom, to see how else the movement could have begun. That it did begin at Jerusalem, under great difficulties and limitations, gives to that city an everlasting name. When we look at the later history and present condition of Jerusalem we are inclined to regard it with supercilious scorn as a vulgar story of coarse fanaticism and sectarian strife. But there are moments and moods when those who have no excessive regard for ceremonies or superstitious reverence for sacred places

feel that there is an ideal element running through it all. "For four thousand years Jerusalem has been the altar, the confessional, the mourner's bench of the human race. This has been the place where human nature has meditated, repented, and aspired; here the infinite, the undying, and spiritual in man have expressed themselves in the melody of song and the importunity of ceaseless prayer; here the currents which drift toward God in human nature have come to share; here their swell and sweep have lifted themselves into the Psalms of David, the prophecies of Isaiah, and the wailings of Jeremiah. The place has an infinite charm for poor, tempted, frail humanity, because here is the spot where One of our own flesh and blood first conquered the world, the flesh, and the devil; here virtue and honour and purity and holiness and tenderness and pity and sympathy and charity were enthroned and invested with the prestige that comes from succeeding. They failed at Athens in Socrates but they triumphed in Jerusalem in Jesus Christ. Human nature was digni-

fied and ennobled by the success of Christ at Jerusalem. He showed what man can be and do."[1]

To these men Jerusalem had come to be the city of God in the supreme sense. In the earlier days it had been a capital city and a royal sanctuary. Then when Samaria was destroyed and local sanctuaries had fallen into disrepute as "heathenish," the claim was made, in Deuteronomy, that there is one God and one sanctuary. When this claim was most vigorously asserted the patriots were, in large numbers, torn from the city and sent into a strange land to learn to worship God without their beloved sanctuary. But the time had not yet come for men to recognise clearly that the formula "one God," rightly understood, means that the claims of rival sanctuaries fall into a subordinate place, become, in fact, matters of sentiment and not of essential faith. For the Jew, Jerusalem must remain, in a special sense, the city of God, the Holy City, a place where men are nearer to God than elsewhere,

[1] See Note, p. 138.

a shrine to which pilgrims from different lands turn with strong desire. Such glory and prestige Jerusalem must have from her own children when what we call an unkindly fate, but which by faith we may recognise as a wise providence, scattered them over the world. But here we may have a proof, more than four centuries before the coming of our Lord, that men outside the sacred circle longed to share in its life. This longing is regarded by the prophet as a gift of God and as prophetic of the future glory of His house. Men must curb their fiery patriotism and chasten their sectarian temper that the pious longing of the stranger may be encouraged, that Jerusalem may accomplish its real destiny by becoming a house of prayer for humanity. Humanity did not mean to him what it means to us, but we may truly say that the spirit of universalism was struggling with the legal barriers behind which it was born.

2. The Nature of the Fulfilment.

Without any apologetic discussion of "prediction" in the stricter sense, we may say that this hope has been fulfilled. The history of Jerusalem is one of the strange things in this wonderful world. It does not enter into competition with Rome or Athens, it belongs to a different order. From the time that David made it the capital of a nation and the centre of its religious life, it has lived in the full light of history and has had a strangely chequered career. It has been the home of proud patriots and fanatical zealots, in it great prophets delivered their message and met their fate. The halo of legend has gathered round it; its sorrows have been chanted in plaintive tones and its glories sung in simple strains. Round its walls fierce battles have been fought, and in its streets the blood and tears of many nations have been shed. Nations and sects have contended for its sacred places, and pilgrims from the four quarters of the globe have wended their painful way thither. The

pilgrims and tourists of to-day, who attain their goal with less expenditure of personal toil, can see that much commercialism is mingled with all this display of devotion, but they can surely see that the real basis of the matter is not in these vulgar accretions but in an idealising of historical facts and a glorifying of the heroic deeds of the past. There is danger in this, but it is not without its noble features; in contending for the largeness and freedom of religious thought we must still remember how dependent the great majority of men are on national tradition and local sentiment. Through it all, however, this is clear, that representatives of all the great nations of the world do now look to Jerusalem as spiritually "the mother of us all," and in that symbolic sense the city has become a house of prayer for all nations.[1]

Still we cannot be content with this; there is something even greater than the romance that lingers round this strange chapter in the world's history, something in comparison

[1] Gal. iv. 26.

with which all that the visible city can offer seems mean and tawdry. What is all this, we are compelled to ask, compared with all the living influences that have gone out into the world, influences which refused to be bound to any place or confined to any one symbol. We must then seek the larger fulfilment in the realm of ideas. The prophets, especially Isaiah and Jeremiah, who were deeply attached to the city, protested against the undue exaltation of altar and temple. Though these men do not give the specific analysis of religious ideas that we expect from a modern teacher, their words imply that there is a spiritual reality that is more important than the outward symbol. As a matter of fact, that which has made Jerusalem a power in the world, made its name stand for the ideal city, and surrounded its memory with such a halo of sacred associations is that it was the home of great teachers and martyrs, messengers of God who bruised their sensitive souls against its ignorance, prejudice, and stupidity. It is in the light of the teaching of those noble men that Jerusalem is viewed

to-day by its most intelligent admirers. The actual city is glorified because its past is viewed in an ideal light, and much more because it has become the centre of a large, intellectual world that has grown out of the ministry of its great men. It is the teaching that was too great for Jerusalem that has made the name of Jerusalem great.

3. Other Elements in the Picture.

One of the things insisted upon here is the observance of the Sabbath, and we know that at the time of the Babylonian exile, and later, this institution received greater emphasis as a religious obligation and a distinctive feature of Jewish religion. The actual origin of this institution is lost in the dim past, but after all the recent discussions we can still say that we owe the Sabbath to the Jews. In what rudimentary form it may have existed before their time is uncertain. In our Bible we can trace a distinct movement and a definite character. In our Old Testament the seven-

week appears and Sabbaths take rank with other religious festivals.[1] In later times it became more religious and ecclesiastical; the weekly meeting for prayer on this day helped to keep Judaism alive in a foreign land. In still later times, when the fight for the purity of the Church was severe, the strict observance of the Sabbath became a test of orthodoxy. This degenerated into hard legalism and petty quibbling until it called forth the protest of our Lord. The conditions of society to-day are quite different; it is impossible to have a total cessation of the varied activities of our complex life. But our larger experience has shown that there is in this institution of the Sabbath a permanent truth. It is easy to ridicule the extremes of scrupulousness, amounting to superstition, that have been manifested in this regard, more especially by Jews and Scotsmen. But a much more profitable exercise of one's powers is to find the positive truth and uplifting power in any great institution. As

[1] Isa. i. 13; Ex. xx. 10-11; Gen. ii. 3; Deut. v. 14-15; Isa. lviii. 6.

the account of creation suggests, the need of periodic rest is not a mere ceremonial demand but is in the nature of things, and if we are better than sheep and goats "which nourish a blind life within the brain," worship will go along with rest. While we maintain freedom of worship, and release all worship from restraint and coercion, it is clear that the community is better for a day of rest; it frees many from the drudgery of work, the slavery of toil, and gives to all who enjoy it the opportunity for that communion with men that is implied in the public worship of God. That the Sabbath, notwithstanding the controversies surrounding it, and the imperfections attached to it, has helped to free men from the bondage of materialism and to bring them to a closer religious fellowship can scarcely be denied. In so far as this is true it has been a religious force.

But the main element is the creation of a book. At a time when the Jews expected the temple to be permanent they were unconsciously preparing the way for a religion that could live without it. When

the temple was lost for a while during the Babylonian exile, the men who preserved their religious loyalty were thrown back upon the Sabbath worship and the study of the book. The result of this was that when six centuries later the temple met its final fate, by the influence of the school and the position assigned to religious teachers the religion was in no danger of perishing. Men missed the temple, they mourned over the desolation of Jerusalem, but for them the problem "How can we sing Jehovah's song in a foreign land?" had been solved. The book had become a bigger thing than the temple. The temple is local and fixed; the book can become universal by means of its free movement. Men must travel to the temple and learn its language, but the book goes out to meet men and speaks to each man in his own tongue. May we not say that the Jews of the restored temple, gathering together their devotional literature for use in their house of prayer and in their daily life, helped to make that house "The House of Prayer" for all nations in a different and a larger sense than

they themselves dreamed of? In doing this they created something greater than any temple, a prayer book for humanity that has exerted an influence on all Christian liturgies and that is more and more appealing to the heart of the world. These psalms and prayers were, no doubt, much more influenced by local struggles and sectional differences than now appears; we must in their case allow something for the softening influence of time; the small human entanglements tend to fall away, as they recede into the distance of the past, and the large universal elements are free to do their noble work. Here everything is turned into devotion and becomes a matter of prayer. Prayer, which does not rest on mere command but rather on deep-seated instinct and pressing need, here becomes vocal and finds classic expression. Nature, history, the life of the community and its particular members, all these varied regions of life are brought within the range of prayer. It is true that there are psalms in praise of "the law" in the ecclesiastical sense, for how could that great realm

of Jewish life be neglected in a book of "common prayer," but it is in this book that we learn that there is in this religion something deeper and richer than external legislation and ritual requirements. Here a rich stream of spiritual life flows freely, reminding us that seekers after God in all ages and churches have much in common. In that temple of humanity that is not bounded by any sectarian walls, these songs and prayers rise continually to heaven. The passionate cry "My soul thirsteth for God"[1] cannot be completely met by any symbol but only by the presence of God Himself, and "He being Lord of heaven and earth dwelleth not in temples made with hands."[2]

[1] Ps. xlii. 2. [2] Acts xvii. 24.

V.

THE CITY OF THE EVER-OPEN DOOR.

ISAIAH LX. 11, 12.

DEUTERO-ISAIAH, the great prophet of consolation, speaks in glowing language of Zion's future glory.[1] In this later section of the book, probably written by a disciple, the richest imagery is used to set forth the splendour of the chosen city—

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come,
And the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee.
For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
And gross darkness the peoples;
But Jehovah shall arise upon thee,
And His glory shall be seen upon thee,
And nations shall come to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising."

[1] xlix. 14 ff.; lii. 1 ff.; liv. 1–7.

It is well for us, when we are inclined to criticise too severely the material forms that these promises assume, to bear in mind, what such passages distinctly assert, that it is the light of Jehovah's presence that gives strength and beauty, supremacy and attraction, to the sanctuary. There is the faith that the God who dwells in heaven must have a city on earth, in order to reveal Himself to mankind, and for the Jew this city must be Jerusalem. There is, we must admit, little of the missionary spirit here; the most exclusive Jews might adopt this gorgeous apocalyptic imagery. But there is a blending of fine ethical elements, and after all the root idea is the majesty of the Divine Presence. The gold of the nations, the treasures of the sea, the obsequious ministry of kings,—these are effects and symbols of that heavenly light which makes the walls of Jerusalem to be Salvation and her gates Praise.

"Instead of brass I will bring in gold,
Instead of iron I will bring in silver;
And I will appoint as thy government Peace,

And as thy despot Righteousness.
No more shall violence be heard of in thy land,
Nor rapine and ruin within thy borders;
But thou shalt call thy walls Deliverance,
And thy gates Renown.
No more shall the sun be thy light,
Nor the moon for brightness illuminate thee;
But Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light,
And thy God thy beauty.
Thy sun shall set never more
And thy moon shall not wane;
But Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light,
And thy days of mourning be ended."[1]

It was not the size, the political power, the commercial splendour, of Jerusalem that inspired such high hopes and dazzling dreams, but the belief that here was the city of God, the dwelling-place of the Most High. That belief was certainly living, even if it at times manifested itself in coarse, narrow forms; it nerved men to fight heroic battles and it inspired steady service in dull prosaic times. This enthusiasm has been contagious, it has passed outside of national boundaries and created a world-ideal—a symbol which no earthly city can completely fulfil.

[1] Revised translation by G. H. Box.

City of the Ever-open Door

I. The Truth in the Poetry.

There is sober truth in this poetic utterance which the world has acknowledged. The central truth is that Judaism had a real contribution to make to the life of the world, something of spiritual quality and abiding significance. The presence of God, the divine light, has indeed gone forth from that city. The religion and the literature, the gift of God and the growth of centuries, has not yet done its work, and the work that it has done can never be forgotten. We refuse to be confined to the measurements of those days and those men; we who can view the whole movement are justified in seeing a meaning in their work that vindicates their extravagant language and exultant tones. They grasped something for themselves, something that on certain conditions they were willing to share with others. We cannot justly reproach them, because the spirit of privilege and monopoly still reigns in us; but we can see clearly that what gave strength to their vision was not the human weakness that was in

it but the fact that they gave the central place to God and believed that what comes from God the world needs and will want to share.[1] It is not simply that they despise the small gods of the heathen but that they have, even in a small way, grasped the thought that the light and glory of the true God is an attractive, unifying force.

We need not dwell on the fact that the hope with regard to Jerusalem received a literal fulfilment[2]; this city whose history is a series of tragedies, whose changeful career is one long story of subjection and destruction, has conquered a large place in the world. In spite of past sorrows and the tawdry glory of the present, men see in her the symbol of the unconquerable kingdom. No city has called forth a more stubborn heroism, a more persistent devotion, a more poetic enthusiasm. Men would fain give to Jerusalem great treasure if they knew how, because they are convinced that she has given much to the world. The glory of Jerusalem was not visible in the dark days

[1] Ps. xlviii. 2, and pp. 33, 54. [2] See also p. 63.

when these words were written: it was an ideal, a creation, of faith. It was never long sustained in actual reality, yet men have felt that in some strange way this was a city of faith and of the faithful. The wealth that men could give faded, spoiled by factions or scattered by ruthless conquerers, but the wealth of tradition and faith could not be destroyed.

2. The Imperfection of the Message.

There is to many of us to-day something distinctly irritating in this class of passages; while we admire them as literature and as poetic outbursts of patriotic feeling, we find them to be poor and limited from the theological point of view. We think that the Jew, instead of learning humility[1] from the teaching of the prophets and the sorrows of his nation, has become narrow and arrogant, and imagines that he, as the favourite of heaven, is to enjoy permanent privilege and superiority. It seems the height of spiritual

[1] Micah vi. 8.

pride, this idea that all the glories of heaven and earth, the treasures of sea and land, are to be tributary to Jerusalem. That foreigners are to be the slaves of the Jews, doing their menial work, that strange people will lick the dust before them and kings bow reverently in their presence—these proud hopes are revolting to our sense of Christian gentleness, even when regarded as homage to a great God and a priestly nation.[1] All this must be frankly admitted, and we must acknowledge that it has done harm, because the Bible has so long been read without any sense of historical perspective. There is, however, much useful instruction here; it reminds us of the real nature of this great literature. This Book of God is also a book of man; its real glory and strength lies in the fact that it is not a mere list of laws or catalogue of abstract doctrines, all its greatest ideas are woven into the texture of human life—a life that through long, rude struggles was raised to sublime heights.

The Christian Church, as the successor of

[1] xlix. 23; lxi. 5.

Judaism, has enjoyed much worldly success, it conquered barbarians and ruled the civilised nations. Its great temples still excite our wonder and stir our reverence. The priests have trod upon the necks of kings and exercised a power mightier than the sword. At one period all the treasures of the world, the gifts of its science and arts, were poured into the lap of a luxurious Church. Ecclesiastics might point to these scriptures as a justification of their demands and claim the course of events as a fulfilment of prophecy. In the hour of such success there were many noble souls who saw clearly that the highest life of the Church was not in these things, but in the preaching of pure truth, in the care of the weak, the ministry to the ignorant and poor; and the world has now distinctly rejected the ideal of ecclesiastical rule and priestly monopoly. We do well to reject these outward forms, but mere negative criticism and refined sarcasm will not suffice; the only way in which we can supersede them is by having the same truth in a nobler expression. In some higher way religion

must be supreme and the temple central in the life of man. But the missionary effort cannot, and will not, wait until the perfect nation and the pure messengers are found. When men tell us to leave the heathen alone and cleanse ourselves from pride, greed, and hypocrisy, their message should be accepted, but not in the form in which it is given. We welcome the reminder that our missionary effort involves an obligation to purify our own personal and social life, but it may be that the desire and hope of sending out the truth is also a God-appointed way to uplift our own life.[1] The way in which the Jew held himself in the face of a hostile world attracted the fierce criticism of foreigners, but it also drew attention to a faith that could challenge the world's scrutiny and respect. Thus, while we acknowledge the limitation of this great hope and reject its literal form as temporary, it may give us the spirit of humility to remember that it is only by the lessons that come to us from cen-

[1] Cf. p. 35.

turies of Christian history that we are able to make this rejection in an intelligent fashion.

3. The Light of Hebrew History.

Suppose we turn upon this passage the light of history drawn from the study of that ancient nation and seen in the larger view of it that is now possible to the careful student. "The open door" may then be shown to mean something that was hidden from the view of this prophet. He wished that the door of the Church should stand ever open to receive tribute; that was his way of expressing the ideas, God is supreme, religion is central, the Church is divine. Unless we interpret his imagery as a noble symbolism, the ideas behind it lose something of their purity by being clothed in forms of this world's wealth. Possibly he did not see that this policy of the open door had been the divine method all through. Recently there has been much discussion as to how much Israel owes to Egypt, Babylon,

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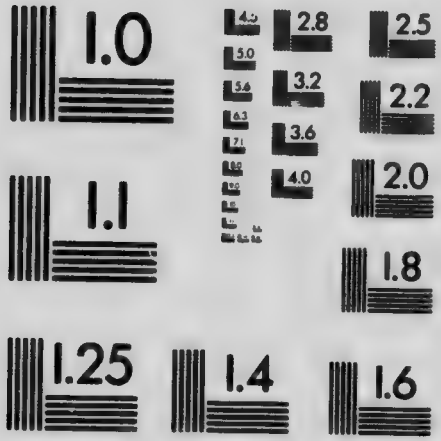

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Canaan, Persia, and Greece. These inquiries and debates are natural in an age like ours, when men of science are deeply interested in the origin of all forms of life and the nature of its development. Sometimes there has been lack of "academic calmness" on the one side and the other; the proud claims on behalf of Israel as an organ of divine revelation seem to act as a challenge and an irritant on the minds of some thinkers, while zealous defenders of those claims have not been lacking. Those who examine this great literature carefully know that whatever has been borrowed has been amply repaid with abundant interest. In fact they know that "borrowing" is a phrase too crude and mechanical to express the complex process. The Hebrews conquered Canaan, but they absorbed much of its spirit and atmosphere; they rejected Baal worship, but claimed that Jehovah was the giver of the fruits of the earth;[1] they refused to worship the star-gods of Babylonia and claimed that their God ruled the stars.[2] In-

[1] Hos. ii. 15, 16. [2] Isa. xl. 26; xlvii. 13.

fluences from Persia and Greece were no doubt treated in the same way. Thus the Hebrew faith was not an empty monotheism or a system of abstract doctrines. All realms on earth and air, in sea and sky, and in the lands beneath the earth, were gradually annexed to Jehovah's dominion, until the God of the fathers was the God of the whole world.[1] Much of this process, like all the great movements of life, was unknown to those in the midst of it; they were not in a position to survey the past or to analyse the present. But when they claimed the world for their God there was the weight of centuries of throbbing life behind them. It was because they were both exclusive and receptive that they grew to be so great in their own realm. There was a catholicity in their thinking, though they did not fully appreciate its logical consequences. What they took they cleansed and uplifted. When they came to write the history of their race they fitted it as best they could into the general framework of the world's life. Simple

[1] Cf. p. 25.

stories from the past and strange beliefs in the present were treated from the point of view that there is one God, and that God is the God revealed in the history of the past and the life of the present. The whole conception was, if not a missionary idea, then the root of all missionary ideas, when the time should come for a fuller understanding of it. We do not say that this writer, claiming a central position for the temple, had all this in view, but we maintain that in estimating the value and importance of his position we must take these things into consideration. To him, at least, the idea of God is central, and from God's ownership of the world there comes all this glorification of the temple. To some extent the gold, silver, and precious stones are the mere furniture or drapery of the faith. He also would have said, "Seek Jehovah first, trust Him, serve Him in noble fellowship, and He will take care of the temple and of you."

4. Our Lesson from the Idea.

When we are thus allowed in some measure to enlarge and transform the idea by holding it in the light of Hebrew history, its applications for ourselves become clear. The time, we know, has gone by for any one Christian temple in East or West to monopolise power and rule all life, even within a small area. Men are beginning to see that this is not the highest kind of dominion. The appropriate lesson from this text refers to the attitude of the Church towards the great outside world. The doors of the temple should stand open to receive the world's gifts, and its windows open for the fresh breeze. But we must conceive of these gifts in a large, liberal spirit; they are gifts not only for the maintenance of the building and the support of the ministry, but also for the fabric of our thought, the form and even the content of our theology. The supreme act of faith is to believe that God is in all our world, the guide of the living present. Organisation we must have,

definite forms of worship and regular methods of communion, but these must be concerned with the problems of the present and not with the preservation of "the crust of custom" that comes from the past. It is because custom was broken down by contact with foreign influences and new social forces that the prophets had to give new messages as to the nature of religion and morality. These messages have proved to be permanent in their spiritual power, but their form must be adapted to meet new needs. Science and art bring to the nations new revelations and new powers, these breed new monopolies and slaveries. It is the province of Christianity to care for the freeing of the slave, not only the distant foreign slave but the slave under the shadow of our own churches. The inspiration that comes to us from the great prophets of the past and especially from the life of the Christ must give stimulus to new forms of service. The world must be claimed for God in a broader and higher sense. New movements of thought that may seem at first to be quite

alien may, on closer examination, be found to express an earnest effort to embody the old truths in a larger form. The social message of the Old Testament and its suggestions of a universal faith await a richer fulfilment. When we speak of the Christian religion as the highest, the absolute, or final religion we surely cannot be thinking of the scholastic theology of a particular period, but rather of the spirit of freedom in it which, because of its noble thought of God the Father, gives power of assimilating all real gains from the thoughts of keen searchers after truth, all living ideas that are not opposed to its central principle. Not to some distant future must we defer the picture of a new Jerusalem whose pilgrims come from the four quarters of the earth.[1] Each church, while faithful to its own noblest traditions, must seek to be an institution that is open to all sources of light and life, that receives from the world rich treasures and consecrates them to the service of the sanctuary. Such a sanctuary will receive

[1] Luke xiii. 29; Rev. xxi. 24, 25.

only that it may give back again; it will seek to place the stamp of heaven's treasury on much that we are tempted to regard as earthly coin; it will seek to breathe into all forms of human service a spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion, so that nothing that relates to human welfare can be regarded as common and unclean. Only thus can the words be fulfilled—

"The Lord shall arise upon thee,
And His glory shall be seen upon thee."

VI.

THE KINGDOM THAT SURVIVES THE SHAKING OF THE WORLD.

HAGGAI II. 6–8; HEBREWS XII. 26, 27.

WHEN we place these two passages side by side, whose origin is separated by five centuries of time, we are reminded of the fact that within the Bible itself we have varied stages of thought. We constantly speak of "a progressive revelation" (Heb. i. 1), but we need to realise more fully what this means in the details of the actual thought and life. In other words, we need to remember that the Bible is not "a book" in the narrow sense of that word but a literature in the full sense of the term. We have a collection of books that came into existence under varied circumstances and at widely separated periods of time; consequently, in that which is to us now "the volume of the book,"[1]

[1] Ps. xl. 7; Heb. x. 7.

we have original statements, and then the later interpretations and transformations.[1] A striking word is taken from the past, lifted into a larger atmosphere, and given a nobler meaning. This is true even within the Old Testament itself, and this statement is more richly illustrated in the New Testament, where the specific claim is made that the New is not a contradiction of, but an enlargement and fulfilment of, the Old. The Old Testament is rightly called "a prophetic book," and is said to contain "the missionary idea" because there is so much in it that refuses to be bound down to any mere local significance. Its noble inconsistencies show the struggle of the truth to reach forth into the common life of humanity.

1. A Pathetic Note.

This is seen in the phrase "yet once, it is a little while" or "yet once more"; if we consider it carefully and in a sympathetic spirit we cannot fail to find in it a reflection

[1] 2 Sam. vii. 8–16; Isa. lv. 3, 4.

c... ...n life in its varied moods. We have here ...e mightiest power that stirs the human spirit, the power of faith, the faith tha gains the victory over the world. But is there not in it also the human weakness that craves for finality and longs to see the problem of the world-process solved by one sudden mighty stroke? This man knew of great shakings in the not distant past: the fall of Nineveh, the defeat of Egypt, the destruction of Jerusalem, the conquest of Babylon. Through all these convulsions his nation had lived and suffered. Those now left in Jerusalem are a small remnant, a few struggling, discouraged patriots, but in this day of small things they still believed that God had brought them throu... these terrible shakings in order to prepare them for a noble future. This was a splendid faith, and in a real sense history has justified it. We who have the larger view are not necessarily greater men; the prophet, in his own way, rose above the world, while we may be allowing it to crush us. He looked for one more great shaking, when this struggling Jerusalem would become the centre of

the world, when admiring nations, overawed by Jehovah's power, would bring into this sanctuary the world's precious things, the silver and the gold; then would the temple abide for evermore in strength, splendour, and attractiveness.[1] These external gifts would be a symbol of a rich community of life.

This prophecy did receive a certain measure of literal fulfilment; it is not pure fancy but rests on sober fact. The judgment that we have now concerning the narrowness and limitation of the prophet's outlook must not blind us to the truth and value of his statement. The building of that temple, the piety and loyalty of that small community, was a thing of significance for the world. That is not a sectarian verdict; it is based upon a large review of those varied and subtle forces that have built up the complex fabric of modern states and churches. The Jews clung with stubborn determination to the task of restoring their city and building their temple until this became the centre of political and religious life, a rallying point for patriotic

[1] Cf. p. 78.

Israelites scattered throughout the world. The result was that the temple, which was a bank as well as a church, received contributions from the faithful to such an extent that, once more, it became a rich storehouse of worldly wealth. Even in this stage of the history we learn that the gold, silver, and "desirable things" are not the real wealth of the Church. These things encourage the worldly spirit among the priests and excited greed among foreigners, so that in the second century B.C., Syrian kings and generals came to Jerusalem not to worship[1] but for the express purpose of robbing the temple. The silver and gold did not save the Church but rather helped forward its ruin. The Syrian tyrant could steal the money but he could not destroy the faith. The living ideas of trust in God and loyalty to the Law were more powerful than gold or the sword. The faith proved itself to be indestructible, the material forces, here as elsewhere, crumbled to decay. The same fact is illustrated by the life that gathered round the temple in still later time,

[1] Acts viii. 27.

when our Lord drove out the money-changers, and declared that the house of prayer had been transformed into a den of thieves.[1] The vision of material splendour had been to some extent fulfilled, but the prophetic ideal was realised not in the majesty of the temple but in the life of the lowly Nazarene. The wealth of the temple and the fanatical reverence that men had for it availed little in the day of judgment when the might of Rome was concentrated on the doomed city. But, after all, how little was lost in the great catastrophe that seemed to so many to be the end of the world. The religion had learned to live without the temple; the faith was free to go forth and assume larger and nobler forms.

2. A Larger Interpretation of the Text.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews belongs to this later time, when the nations of that ancient world had been drawn nearer together and the shaking must be more

[1] Isa. lvi. 7; Matt. xxi. 13.

complex in character. The temple had passed through its last great tragedy and the evangelists of the Cross were proclaiming their great message. This writer claims that Christianity is heir to all that was really of permanent value in the older system. That is regarded as preparatory, symbolic, and temporary; those who, by faith, have grasped the unseen ideas, can live without these visible forms which in their day were rich in prophetic power. From this point of view he feels justified in giving a larger interpretation to the ancient word. To him the shaking does not mean the material enrichment of the temple. His vision is not the picture of a restored and glorified temple with its doors ever open to receive the treasures of the world. The purpose of the shaking is that the external temporary things may be cast off and the abiding truth more clearly revealed. There are things which, by their very nature, cannot be shaken, and the man who lays hold of them has a kingdom that cannot be moved. This man, no doubt, helped many timid wavering souls, and he still cheers and inspires

us by the boldness of his faith. Probably he also had his moments of doubt; it was certainly not without a struggle that he reached this lofty height and was able, in a world of change, to look out with calm confidence and claim to have received a kingdom that cannot be moved. In these restless days we may be disposed to envy him his simple faith. But when we look a little closer we may see that it is not a *simple* faith in any shallow sense; it is a faith that possesses high, intellectual qualities, it seeks to reinterpret history and to face all the new problems in the light of knowledge that is inspired but not enslaved by the great teachings of the past.[1]

We talk much in our time about living in a time of change when faith is tested by the demands of a larger view of the world. But it is well to remember that even in this regard no strange thing has happened to us; the prophets of the earlier ages had a similar experience. "How can we sing the Lord's song in this foreign land?" is not a new question; it has often been wrung from the

[1] See Chapter I.

hearts of men who wished to reconcile the past and the present, who desired in new circumstances to be loyal to the old truth. We know that Jews and Christians have felt this most keenly, in the living periods of their history, because, while they clung to a sacred past, they had a faith that looked forward for still richer revelations of the divine kingdom. There are in such crises three courses open to the individual believer. These three pathways were followed by men in the Babylonian exile in essentially the same spirit as men follow them to-day in Judaism or Christianity. (1) A man may lose his theology or his faith or both. He may fall away from his trust in God and declare that life has become meaningless. Men who cannot receive the new light feel that the change is all loss; God has gone away with the ancient form, and for them there is no new vision. (2) Others cling to their old faith and cherish a still deeper loyalty for the forms of the past. That is surely better than the utter loss of faith; men who feel that for them God is in the

traditional form do well to cling to that sacred thing. No form of revelation is perfect, and it is not easy to acknowledge that the shrine at which we have worshipped may be broken and cast away without loss to the world. In regard to all these controversies we all do well to cultivate a kindly spirit towards those who are at different stages of the spiritual movement. (3) The still higher way is that which has been trodden by the real leaders of the church and humanity. These "men of light and leading" have found that the new form in which God gave the truth to them was a larger, more glorious, form of the old faith; after the pain of the struggle was over they saw clearly that they had not suffered loss; they refused to be called traitors to the old religion; the way that men called "heresy" was a way of worship and of service that led them more directly to the throne of God. This is a task that awaits us in every "transitional period"; we must accept all new facts as fresh revelations of God's power and wisdom, and try to show that by these new visions the principles of

the older faith stand out in larger form and clearer light.

3. The Kingdom that cannot be Moved.

It is the very essence of faith to maintain that there is a kingdom that cannot be moved, that there are spiritual treasures which must survive all the fierce convulsions that shake the world. This attitude of mind is common to the simple-minded prophet who toiled for the restoration of the temple, and to the philosophic theologian who explains to us why we can dispense with all temples. Their faith, at the heart of it, is essentially the same, only the form is different. To Haggai the temple is central and immovable ; the shakings of the world's kingdom can only have the effect of enriching God's sanctuary. Those of us who believe in an eternal God and an abiding kingdom can say the same thing, but for us it means something different. It means that the God of the temple is the centre of our life, and hence religion is no longer bound to a particular temple. It means that the

truth cannot be destroyed, and what seems to be loss is really enlargement and enrichment. It means, further, that there is running through history "an increasing purpose" which tends to break down barriers and give a real unity to humanity by the spreading of the idea of one God. To the ancient prophets this unity was to be brought about by the world's recognition of the true God in Israel. The temple was to be glorified by becoming a religious centre not simply for Israelite patriots and pilgrims but in some sense for the whole world.[1] The ideal of one God and of human brotherhood remains, but it is no longer monopolised by one city or fastened to one sanctuary. It is the work of an enlightened Christianity to show that these ideas do not evaporate, that these truths do not lose their power when they are cut clear away from tribal and sectarian forms. We must prove that these large statements concerning the purity and freedom of Christian ideas are not philosophical abstractions but our very life. True, to live at this higher

[1] See Chapter II.

altitude demands a stronger faith, but for many of us it must be this faith or none, the old narrow tribal views can no longer live in harmony with the only conception of God that is possible—a God of all time and the whole world.

If any vindication were needed for the attempt to find the principle in an ancient saying and give it a wider application, we can find it within the pages of the Bible itself. The prophet Haggai, in his own way, believed that no shaking can destroy the kingdom of God on earth, that the God of Israel rules the world and makes the changes in the political sphere work out the enrichment of his Church. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews believes the same thing but presents it in a form that reflects a broader philosophy of religion. When we discuss the question of "gain and loss," and when the old truth has been so transformed that we cry out "What is left?" we need to fall back upon the essential Christian belief that there is a Kingdom that cannot be moved, and that the Lord of this Kingdom is the living Christ.

We must recognise not only that "the kingdom" can no longer be exclusively identified with Jerusalem or Rome but also that it is larger than any or all ecclesiastical organisations. From this point of view there can be no real "loss"; there may be loss to individuals or particular communities through their failure to assimilate new truth or rise to larger opportunity, but because God is behind it the larger movement must be a gain to humanity.

We are now beginning to see that the Bible has grown larger and richer under the severe searching study that earnest scholars have devoted to it during many generations. It tells more clearly than ever the story of a growing revelation of God meant for humanity and not merely for one race. Even when its life circled largely round one small city there were truths struggling for expression that cried out for the larger city of God. Science has revealed to us a larger world in which there can be only one God in whom "we live and move and have our being." One living movement everywhere, one law ruling through all spheres; this is the watch-

word of the higher thought of our time. It puts to shame all mere local religions and sectarian monopolies. It cannot be content with a God who merely created some past things, it calls for a creed that shall embrace the whole life of the world. The social problem presses hard, it taxes the power of the Church. It sometimes makes us feel that we are helpless in the face of forces that cannot easily be controlled and guided. Is this failure and death or is it the growing pain of a new and larger life? No one city can contain, no one church can guide, this restless movement of humanity; by no small formula can this complex situation be met. The rallying point to-day is not in a particular city or visible temple but round a Person; we turn to One in whom great movements of the past have centred and from whom new impulse springs. The faith that He quickens in us gives us courage to believe that there really is "a kingdom that cannot he moved," an eternal city of truth and righteousness whose builder and maker is God.[1]

[1] Heb. xi. 10.

VII.

THE CITY WITHOUT A WALL.

ZECHARIAH II. 1-5.

THE first eight chapters of the book that bears the name of Zechariah forms practically one discourse. The remaining six chapters belong to a later period and are quite different in their literary character and spiritual temper; with these we have no present concern. The genuine sermon of Zechariah was delivered, at the close of the sixth century B.C., for the purpose of consoling the Jewish community in its darkness and distress, and strengthening the leaders in the efforts towards the rebuilding of the temple. These different chapters may be the substance of different discourses given at that time, but they are now one sermon, the aim of which is to make clear that God will sustain the leaders and bless

the nation. The prophet may well have had in his mind the words of his great forerunner—

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,
That her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned;
That she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." [1]

He tells us that he received from the angel "good and comfortable words" (i. 13), and that his own commission was in this spirit, there came to him from Jehovah the command to cry out the gracious promise: "My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion and shall yet choose Jerusalem" (i. 17). He is therefore, by the needs of the situation, and by the divine call, a son of consolation.

I. The Popular Presentation of Truth.

The prophet's sermon is full of illustrations or word-pictures; he speaks in parables. These allegories are rich in suggestion and

[1] Isa. xl. 1, 2.

were likely to quicken a deeper interest in his teaching. But these features of the discourse which were the most attractive then are precisely the parts which now require the most careful study and the fullest explanation. This man whose visions have become obscure, through the lapse of time and change of place, could have dispensed with oratorical adornments and rhetorical devices, for he was certainly a master of strong, clear speech. Note his beautiful promise of peace in viii. 4, and his fine ethical charter of the city in verses 16 and 17 of the same chapter. He did not use pictures because he was unable to make clear statements but because these illustrations quickened the imagination of his hearers and gave real satisfaction to his own soul. In these strange visionary forms promises can find expression that are too large for mere formal statement. The visions arrested attention and provoked thought at the time. Now they demand careful study so that we may enter into the mode of thought of a generation that has long passed away. The scientific study of

the Bible, by which we seek to place ourselves in living relationship with the great prophet, is an attempt to wipe the dust off these ancient pictures so that the essential features may be more clearly seen. This is not a mere intellectual discipline, it is an exercise of imagination and an effort of faith. Surely it is one aspect of "the communion of saints" when we seek to pass over the barriers of time and space, language and nation, in order to appreciate and appropriate the great truth uttered by a noble preacher of a distant age. The popular preacher of twenty-five centuries ago demands and justifies scientific study to-day, and when we give that study in a reverent and sympathetic spirit we express our faith in some essential truths. First, that in the world of spirit as well as in that of nature the present grows out of the past, so that, in so far as we lay hold of God's growing revelation, we can claim real kinship with the saints and martyrs of earlier days. Second, these great men who wrestled faithfully with the problems of life centuries ago, did really prepare the way for us; they lifted

their little life into the light of God's great kingdom and, in so doing, laid down, in a simple form, eternal principles. Third, this being so, it is possible for us without any allegorising or straining to find more in their visions than was present to themselves, because the principle that they have discovered demands, in our larger world, a larger application. Hence the abiding significance of this popular sermon.

It is surely appropriate that the hopes of Jerusalem should be expressed by the figure of a young man. The young man has his own outlook towards the future; it is no sufficient gospel for him to be told about "the good old times." Read that striking passage Ezra iii. 11–13, which tells of the strangely mingled sound of weeping and rejoicing when those come together, in one festival, whose outlook was so different; some clung with tears to the sacred past, and others exulted in the hope of a new future. The prophet has preached peace and prosperity; the people are inclined to believe him, but they say, Tell us more definitely the

meaning of this thing; how big is Jerusalem going to be? The young are hopeful as to the future, their destiny is hidden in it, they long for clear-cut statements and well-defined programmes. It is fitting then that the prophet should symbolise the faith of Jerusalem by means of a young man, alert and eager, who goes forth to do some land-surveying and measure the boundaries of the new city. The figure expresses faith, an acceptance of the promise as to the future greatness of the city. But the faith, quick and energetic as it is, is not large enough, it is not going to be possible to lay out a definite plan of the city because of the abundance of life in it. The pressure of living forces will be so great that the ancient barriers will be ignored; it will be a time of peace, so that the walls can be dispensed with and the presence of Jehovah will be a wall of fire, a protection and an inspiration to the loyal people. This is the prophet's reply to the demand for statistics. Here is a man who speaks with confidence in "the day of small things"; he looks forward with uncon-

querable hope to a larger, richer future for the city. The source of his confidence is clearly stated; it is that Jehovah will quicken the life within and guard against all destructive forces from without. It is because the divine life is the centre of his hope that we are justified in giving wider range and richer meaning to his teaching than at first sight seems to be implied in his words.

2. A City Without a Wall.

Surely there is a great boldness of faith in the form in which he has chosen to express the promise. A city without a wall was unknown in his time, and it is only in recent times that by the creation of large countries with common sentiments and interests it has become a literal fact. For many centuries the very idea of a city was that of a walled space, the centre of a district, where men could flee for refuge when the enemy scoured the open country. Within these walls were found the sanctuary where men worshipped their God and the fortresses where they

resisted the last attack of their foes. For a man to believe that God would be present with his people in such a living sense that the common material defences would be superseded was a supreme act of faith. There is splendid audacity in the thought, but we are not strong enough even now to accept it in all its fulness. It is an ideal which worldly common sense regards with scorn as the mere play of religious fancy.

It is possible to point out that there was little, if any, literal fulfilment of this great promise. The Jews continued to struggle with wonderful perseverance against the hard, prosaic difficulties of their situation. When, three centuries later, an effort was made to destroy their sacred books and crush their religious life, the men of living faith and stern piety rose in revolt and vindicated their right to national independence and religious freedom. This military glory and political independence thus attained lasted for a short time; it was followed by internal conflict and absorption within the Roman Empire. In the last great struggle with the

Roman legions the inhabitants of Jerusalem fought with fanatical faith and frenzied zeal, but it was all in vain; there was no wall of fire to protect the city and devour the enemy. The Jew then became, in the fullest sense, "a man without a country"; since then he has wandered over the world and in many lands, has been the object of enmity or contempt. It appears, then, that the vision of the city without a wall is the dream of a religious enthusiast, and that the Jew has received as his portion not permanent peace but continual torment—a torment largely accounted for by the fact that he has clung with such unswerving loyalty to the peculiar forms of his own faith and law. Is this, however, a full account of this great matter? Is there not a permanent truth in the thought that the strength and security of a community is found in the faith that unites it to God and not in the wall that separates it from mankind? There were times when the Jews trusted in the wall rather than in their God. In those days a strong wall was a great defence for a well-placed city, and men were

slow in learning that there is a nobler defence in an intelligent service of God and a sympathetic treatment of each other. In other words, it is very slowly that men have learned this great truth, grasped what we may call this great missionary idea, that the presence of God, in so far as it is truly and intelligently realised, tends to unite men rather than separate them; the divine fire which protects the righteous breaks down the hard material barriers which have served their purpose and had their day.

3. The Extension of the Idea.

Because the prophet was what we call "a spiritually minded man," because the chief thought for him was the presence of God and not the material greatness or numerical power of the city, we may justly credit him with the idea that the presence of God is a power that breaks down the old barriers so that the life of "the city of God" may stream forth upon the world. Translated into these terms we can see that the later history of Judaism and

the growth of Christianity has been an advance along this line and so a fulfilment of the prophecy.

The Jews were forced out into the great world, and wherever they went carried their religion with them; and notwithstanding their hard legalism and exclusive temper the nobility and attraction of that religion manifested itself. The patriotic saintly men scattered through foreign lands thought with tenderness of Jerusalem as the city of their God and the home of their religion, but many of them began to realise that the true Zion is not the soil or the walls of an earthly city but the living truth, the glorious revelation from God. From this point of view, the prophecy received a very real fulfilment, Jerusalem did indeed break its barriers; the life inspired by prophets and regulated by lawgivers overspread the world, and became one of the most important factors in its religious life. Churches and sects may struggle, as they do to-day, for the soil of the ancient city, fighting with vulgar fanaticism for "the sacred places," but the city of God, "Jeru-

salem the golden," is otherwhere, it is found wherever men are fighting for true liberty, personal purity, and social righteousness.

Monopoly has been tried both in Judaism and Christianity; the attempt has been made to prove that the city of God is a walled city, a national or ecclesiastical enclosure. The effort to make all pious souls conform to one type of worship and creed has been a ghastly failure. It is one feature in the history of the Christian Church that fills us with shame and that justifies the unbeliever's sharpest criticism. Coercion and monopoly are the weapons not of faith but of unbelief. The proud Church that claims to have the exclusive right to "the keys" of the city is doing her best work where she has to live in the light and face honest competition. In that case, as elsewhere, exclusiveness means arrogance, and monopoly leads to rottenness. If any church could build a high wall and keep out all kinds of "modernism," all problems that come from the conflict of new ideas and foreign forces, the result would not be a city but a cemetery, a beautiful place for dead

bones to rest, but a poor substitute for the real movement of healthy life. When men think that they have made a city of God of their own, with properly designed walls, so that they can confine and control the great revelation, dispensing it to men with a kindly, patronising air, then they stand before the world as the supreme representative of Christianity. This is all very grand in appearance and when represented in noble forms of architecture and oratory, but the fact remains that it is only the small things that can be imprisoned in sectarian bonds, however beautiful these may be. God is everywhere, thought is free ; the essential condition of liberty is the revelation of this Divine presence that gives meaning to the life of humanity.

Here we have gained a principle that is true everywhere and at all times, though the revelation of it has been painfully slow and gradual. Where God is, there and there only is real liberty. Such a presence of God is now possible anywhere, being dependent on the state of the soul not the situation of

the soil. If this presence is really working in any city and nation, as it was in Jerusalem and among the Jews, a missionary idea will grow there even in unconscious forms, that is, there will be a conviction that there is something that the world needs and desires because it is something that comes from the Supreme God. The formal missionary organisation comes later; it must be preceded by a life that has in it a consciousness of Divinity and so carries with it a claim to universality. Within the walls of sect and nation the seed has been planted, but if it is really the tree of life whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations,"[1] it will burst all narrow enclosures and claim kinship with the untrammelled creative forces.

In the personal life, too, this principle has its application. We marvel sometimes at the freedom of our Lord Jesus, at His determination to recognise no law or etiquette which would cut Him off from humanity. He does not engage in "foreign missionary work" in the formal sense, but He embodies

[1] Rev. xxii. 2.

in His life principles which lie behind all true mission work. For Him God is Father, men are brothers, and the city of God is neither in "this mountain" nor yet in Jerusalem,[1] but where there is a spirit seeking the truth; His disciples may have sought to embody these ideas more fully in creeds and churches, but in Him they find a living expression. Because the fire of the Divine presence was fully realised in Him, He was the perfect citizen of "the city without a wall," and, being its perfect citizen, He was also its King.

[1] John iv. 21.

VIII.

THE FINAL FESTIVAL.

Isaiah XXV. 6–8.

As an introduction to this noble poem, we have the story of a marginal note and its destiny. We need to remember that our Old Testament comes down to us from a time when books in our sense did not exist; the written record was then preserved on bricks or skins, "the roll of the book"[1] had to be painfully made and copied by hand. It was much more difficult then than now to reproduce the copy with perfect accuracy, and it was not until a late date that this became a sacred duty. The careful scribe loved and respected the literature to which so much toil had been given and desired to render it accurately, but he was not, at first, a slave to the letter. Words rendered dim by time or

[1] Ps. xl. 7.

illegible through rough usage had to be restored, and explanatory notes made in the margin were, in some cases, carried into the text. Illustrations or demonstrations of this need not now be attempted, but the "gloss" or marginal note supposed to be contained in this poem is worthy of a little attention. The sentence "He will swallow up death in victory" or, as the R.V. has it more correctly, "He hath swallowed up death for ever" is regarded by many careful scholars as just such an explanatory note. It interrupts the thought; it separates the two elements of a beautiful figure and seems to be awkward from the metrical point of view. If this is true, see what an interesting light it throws upon the written word. A devout student is poring reverently over the sacred page and meditating upon the meaning of this noble picture of future blessedness. He perhaps has suffered a heavy loss, and thinks that in the great day of the fuller revelation Jehovah will destroy the power of death which causes such sad havoc in this world. This God-given thought he writes in the margin of his

copy, and a later scribe treats it as part of the original text that had been accidentally omitted. When the apostle of the Gentiles comes to write his vindication of the Christian hope, he thinks of this passage, seizes this particular phrase, and gives it an even nobler setting and wider scope, when he cries, "Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."[1] Truly no great word is lost, it finds its place and does its work.

I. The Universality of Sorrow.

Here is a promise that Jehovah will destroy "the face of the covering that is cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations." The reference that is given in the margin of our Bible would lead us to think of a veil of ignorance or prejudice which hinders men from seeing the beauty and discerning the real meaning of God's revelation.[2] But this does not seem to be the right line; rather we have a beauti-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 54. [2] 2 Cor. iii. 15.

ful figure, a personification of the nations, under the form of a sorrowful woman. Jehovah, as father or husband, draws near to invite her to the festival; he lifts the veil and lo, there are tears. How can one come to the festival with weeping eyes or tear-stained face? As a preparation for the joyful feast God must wipe away all tears from her eyes.[1] There are many passages that speak of the rebuke of sinners and the destruction of sin; here we have one that, in picturesque poetic fashion, tells of the conquest of sorrow.

This statement affirms the reality of sorrow and the power and purpose of God to conquer it. The poet, no doubt, speaks out of his own life, but he certainly sets his bright picture over against the sombre background of his nation's experience. The history of Israel is very largely a story of sorrow and disappointment; it had its calm hours, its days of simple joy, its moments of national triumph, but there were periods of terrible calamity and heart-rending disappointment. The power to write enduring

[1] Rev. xxi. 4.

psalms of penitence and minister sympathy to a sorrowful world was purchased at a great cost. The great nations of the world that have rendered the highest service to humanity have themselves wrestled with the problem of life and faced the mystery of sorrow. This is pre-eminently true of God's servant, Israel. In acquiring the great revelation and in holding it fast, this nation has suffered from division within and persecution without. The sweetest "songs of Zion" owe much of their pure quality to the discipline of sorrow.

Sorrow is a real thing, we need all the power of God to cope with it and take the sting out of it. In our day there are those who claim to have "new thought," a philosophy that preaches the unreality of sorrow. The phrase is not strictly correct. We have a knowledge of new facts, new thoughts are suggested by these, and our great systems of science and philosophy are modified. But we have no new type of thought. The ultra-spiritual philosophy that resolves all pain and evil into something unreal or imaginary

is not by any means modern, it may be found, in its most radical forms, in ancient India. The Hebrew religion, however, was sober, it had a firm grip of mother earth, it did not fall into a false spiritualism or lose itself in the morass of a spurious mysticism. Even if it did not attain to the more ethereal forms of refinement it has still its part to play. It teaches us to face sorrow in the name of God. Suicide is a confession of defeat and a counsel of despair; earthly stimulants cannot minister to a mind diseased, they only aggravate the malady; man's need is the need of God to wipe the tears from his eyes and give a sacrificial power to pain.

The universality of sorrow is here taken for granted; the promise comes to a sorrowful world, and the Jew can claim no monopoly of sorrow. Pain, bereavement, disappointment, these are indeed touches of nature that make the whole world kin. It is well to feel our community of life in this sad region, for it may help to break down useless barriers in other directions. One may say justly that this is only a mood; it

does not represent the whole of human life. True, but it is a mood that corresponds to an actual phase of life, it is not morbid irritability or gloomy exaggeration. We would not ignore the advance of science or undervalue the resources of civilisation, but we can understand men who, in moments of despondency, declare that very little impression has been made on the great mass of human suffering and that the burden and mystery of it all presses with crushing weight on their souls. Civilisation, they say, has not conquered the ills of humanity but only changed many of them into more refined forms of torture. That is a great subject not to be explored at this point, as we are concerned with the universality of the sorrow which serves as a basis for the great promises. There are times when both the individual and the nation can say—

> "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me."[1]

A great sorrow always brings with it a sense

[1] Lam. i. 12.

of isolation, it separates us from men, and it has often been taken to mean "the curse of God." It is then a part of the growing missionary idea to recognise that the sorrow which calls for divine help and sympathy is not a sectarian thing; here at least there is proof of the oneness of humanity. Differences of race, language, and creed cannot hide the real sameness of human life; physical pain, mental torture, and spiritual anguish are substantially the same in all lands and among all classes. In whatever way we may state this, it is at the basis of our common sympathy and our efforts after mutual helpfulness.

2. The Universality of the Promise.

The Lord of hosts is to prepare this feast for "*all* peoples" and the tears are to be wiped "from off *all* faces." Unlike some other pictures of the future victory, the consolation is not confined to the Jews, it is a festival for all those stricken by sorrow. The form in which the promise comes may

seem to many of us to be primitive and child-like, it is to be a feast of fat, sweet, stimulating things. Those who are accustomed to generous living every day can scarcely feel the power of this appeal in its literal sense. It is those who know hunger who can appreciate most keenly the promise of the feast. Those ancient peoples, as a rule, did live the simple life; their life was hard and their fare plain; it was rarely that luscious meat and sparkling wine formed part of the meal. Such luxuries were reserved for great festive days when men rejoiced before God and with each other. Addressed to such a people the figure was natural, and we can understand why it has played a powerful part in the poetic descriptions of future blessedness. The future was to them the present purified and glorified, not some shadowy, ethereal reflection of it.[1]

Literal hunger still appears among the pains of life, so that there are many to whom these figures appeal mightily; and even in respectable well-fed congregations there are

[1] Isa. lv. 2; John iv. 10; Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 17; etc.

hungry hearts, there are men and women who know that it is possible to have plenty and yet be sore at heart and empty in soul. These hearts desire to take hold of some great promise that shall lift them out of weariness and quicken in them a new spirit of hope. Men who have needs that money cannot satisfy and who have lost the power to enjoy the simple things of life, to these also the promise comes that life may be made new, the zest and joy of it restored.

The glory of the Old Testament religion is in this clear strong faith for the future. In later times something of hardness and stagnation came to it, but with the prophets and poets of our sacred books it was vital, flexible, refusing to be crushed by disappointments. Through the blinding tears the glory of the future is dimly seen, but there is faith that God will wipe away the tears and the vision dawn in all its splendour. The Old Testament and the religion that it expressed was the result of a growth stimulated by the Divine Spirit and revealed in the lives of noble men. The hard crust of

custom was often broken and fresh sources of blessing allowed to rush up from God's living springs. The prophetic movement was always moving forward, never content with the past. If there was, in the popular religion, any remains of that ancestor worship which tended to lay the dead hand of the past too heavily upon the living generations, the prophets conquered this by their insistent preaching of a living, present God who makes new demands of faith and duty upon His people. Reverence for parents and elders is still enjoined and continues to be a noble element in all true religion, but the spontaneous life of the prophets would not brook bondage from the dead past, though they enlarged its living tradition.

Thus the religion has ever a forward look, straining its eager gaze towards a richer future and always expecting some nobler thing from God. Both in its perfection and its imperfection such a religion is prophetic; the beauty of the bud is a promise of the richer fulness and fragrance of the flower. We admire, with reverence, the many forms

of faith that appear in this great literature; we find them heroic and sublime, in their own way, approaching perfection, but we have to recognise that often they are put in a form that we must regard as local and limited, a form that in the light of the later revelation is imperfect. But we must reiterate the statement that there is a prophetic element on both sides. This rests upon our belief that God is behind the whole movement; He is present in strength; and the imperfection is a cry to Him for more light, an appeal to remove the limitation and give to His truth the freedom of the world.

3. The Limitation of a Great Idea.

In this poem we have the bright hope for the future assuming a missionary form, comprehending in a sympathetic spirit all the sorrowful nations of the world, but there is a condition attached which shows that, as we might expect, the national spirit is not yet left behind. Although the thought is not elaborated here it is clearly present that the

Jew is to maintain his superiority, to this extent at least, that his city is to become the city of God. "*In this mountain* shall Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things." It is a great claim, a magnificent aspiration, that the universal need shall be met in this one city, that Jerusalem shall be not only the honoured sanctuary of Judaism but also the centre of light and healing for the world.[1] We are prepared to interpret this in a sympathetic spirit, to pay the just tribute to the wonderful history of this city and acknowledge the great things that have come out of it, but we have to declare that in this precise form the prophecy cannot be fulfilled, that no one city can monopolise the Divine ministries. There is great importance to be attached to the attractive power of religion which draws willing pilgrims to its source and centre, but this power must go forth into the wide world and take to itself varied and changing forms.[2]

The contrast between the actual and the ideal Jerusalem is striking, in fact we may

[1] See also pp. 30, 65, 76. [2] Isa. ii. 1–4; and xlii. 1–4.

say, without straining the expression, that it is tragic. Jerusalem did remain for some time after this poem was written the centre of Jewish religion, the place towards which the scattered patriots could look with reverent aspiration and cry, "I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of Jehovah." Even then, while the temple was standing, pilgrims of other lands and races came to pay their tribute of praise to the God of Israel. But it has been for long a desolation, for the Jew a symbol of shame and national failure. It is now a sacred city to the people of three religions, but its life is marred by the vulgar quarrels of contending sects. When fanatics fight and blood is shed on account of its "holy places," it seems that within its gates the principles of spiritual religion are ignored and the Christ crucified afresh. How sordid and sensational all this appears to be when it is lifted into the light of pure prophetic teaching! In the Christian vocabulary, Jerusalem means something quite different; the name has been raised into another atmosphere and speaks of

the ideal city of God, "Jerusalem the golden," the home of all the saints; or it prophesies of heaven, the celestial city of the deathless future.

But whatever form our faith in the future may take, we see clearly that no city on earth can, in the spiritual sense, rule the world. Jerusalem, Rome, Geneva, Canterbury, these and other famous shrines, centres of ancient religion or reforming zeal, have their historic interest, but the truth is larger than any or all of them. Never again on an immense scale can the attempt at uniformity and centralisation be made with any prospect of real success. Monopoly must confine itself to places that are off the main track of the world's life. "This mountain" may appeal to our reverence because of its past, but never again can it dominate the life of mankind. We are not called to lose all local colour and attractive traditions in dim, theological abstractions, but we must have a religion that can create new homes for itself and that can bring the promise of the Father's presence in all times and places.

Even a crude faith is better than hopeless

scepticism. The essential thing is that religion must not lose its true catholicity; it must claim to meet and conquer the common sorrow. It must maintain its forward look, its faith in the possibility of new and glorious revelation. The old faith may be translated into permanent forms. There is the hope of national success; this may be taken to mean not mere material prosperity, but success in solving the problem of social life in such a way as to give a chance at life's feast to those who are poor and weak. The nation that cares for its own in the noblest sense, realising the spirit of brotherhood, will, by the very fact, be a missionary nation.[1] Then there is the hope of personal immortality; this has come to us in the teaching of the greatest saints and in the life of our Lord; we cannot surrender it without severe loss. But with this there must be the conviction that the banquet is spread for us here and now, that the realisation of communion with God in the present is our source of satisfaction and our basis of hope.[2] Heaven

[1] Cf. p. 35.

[2] Ps. lxxiii. 25.

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is not a mechanical compensation for pain and loss here, it is the "eternal life" revealed through communion with God and rising into its own sphere to fulfil its own destiny.

"Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and
which entered not into the heart of man,
Whatsoever things God prepared
For them that love him." [1]

[1] Isa. lxiv. 4; 1 Cor. ii. 11.

APPENDIX.

SOME ADDITIONAL READING.

In these expositions an attempt has been made to show that while Judaism did not become, in a formal sense, a missionary religion, yet in the Old Testament literature as it now lies before us, we can discern a movement towards universalism which afterwards found fuller expression in Christianity. In discourses of this nature there must necessarily be more repetition and less methodical treatment than in an essay or scientific monograph. But it is hoped that even in this popular presentation certain essential features of this great hope have been made prominent, and, without undue strain, appropriate lessons which may be applied to our own religious and social life. It is difficult to give a bibliography of such a subject, as it is mostly treated in an incidental manner in books on history and theology or in commentaries dealing with the particular passages.

In 1896 there was published a lecture by

Appendix

Max Löhr (*Der Missionsgedanke im Alten Testament*) which sought to give a brief scientific statement of the subject. Professor Löhr's position may be seen from the quotation already given at p. viii. He quotes Nöldeke to the effect that cosmopolitanism, something like our missionary thought, which is inseparable from Christianity, could only gain strength when Semitic and Hellenic thought had begun to mingle. He finds in such passages as Jer. xii. 14 f.; xvi. 19, the first sure appearance of the missionary idea. The texts expounded in the course of his study are drawn very largely from Isaiah and the Psalter.

It was not possible within the compass of this volume to discuss such related subjects as the temper of the Book of Esther, and the eschatology of Ezekiel and later prophets. The whole question of the relation of Hebrews to foreigners is dealt with, in an able manner, by Prof. A. Bertholet (*Die Stellung der Israeliten und der Juden zu den Fremden*, 1896).

Besides the regular histories and commentaries, the following easily-accessible books may also be consulted :—

Israel among the Nations, by P. Leroy Beaulieu.

Appendix

Politics and Religion in Ancient Israel, by J. C. Todd.
The Exile and the Restoration, by Dr. A. B. Davidson.
After the Exile, by P. Hay Hunter.
The Book of Isaiah, by C. H. Box.
The Messages of the Psalmists, by Dr. J. E. McFadyen.
Prophetic Ideas and Ideals, by Dr. W. G. Jordan.
The Bible as a Missionary Book, by Dr. R. F. Horton.

On the history of Jerusalem and its place in the life of the nation, Dr. Geo. A. Smith's two volumes are of first-class interest and importance. The quotation on p. 61 is from a booklet on *The History of Jerusalem*, by Dr. J. E. Lee of St. Louis, U.S.A.

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